THE CHRIST FACE IN ART

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Frontispiece. *Hollyer.*

ROSSETTI. Christ at the House of Simon the Pharisee.

THE CHRIST FACE IN ART

BY

JAMES BURNS

WITH SIXTY-TWO ILLUSTRATIONS

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To

MY WIFE

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INTRODUCTION

The aim of this book is to trace the growth and historical development of sacred Art as expressed in the Face of Christ, and as conceived by the greatest artists of each age and country.

A glance at its illustrations will disclose how many and how varied have been the efforts made to attain to the ideal Face, and how far each artist has been influenced by nationality and by tradition.

With all the variety of treatment, however, which these illustrations disclose, it will be impossible to overlook the fact that one distinct type of feature pervades them all, and this awakens the profoundly interesting inquiry whether or not this type of feature actually belonged to Christ, so that regarding it we can form some true impression of what He was like as He lived amongst men.

There is no doubt as to what we wish to believe. We would fain believe that some likeness is preserved of our Lord as He lived upon earth, so that we might possess a record not only of His words, but also of how He appeared to those who were so blessed as to look upon His Face. Nor does this wish spring from mere curiosity. It springs from that devout and reverent interest which seeks to know all that can be known of One who stands unique in history and in experience. "I am only a poor man," said Carlyle once to Holman Hunt, "but I can say

in serious truth that I would give one-third of what I possess for a veritable contemporaneous representation of Jesus Christ. . . . Had these carvers of marble chiselled a faithful statue of the Son of Man, as He called Himself, and shown us what manner of man He was like, what His height, what His build, and what the features of His sorrow-marked face were, and what His dress, I for one would have thanked the sculptor with all the gratitude of my heart for that portrait as the most precious heirloom of the ages." Have we then such a portrait? Is the type of face which we instantly recognise in Art as the Face of Christ an actual likeness of the "pale Galilean" who stood before Pilate's throne, or is it merely a conventional type of feature which gradually formed itself, then became fixed, and has since been imitated?

It may be of interest to see what can be said in favour and against.

I

In the first place it must be admitted that there is no inherent improbability that a portrait of our Lord was painted during His life upon earth. There were portrait painters and sculptors scattered all over the Roman Empire at the dawn of the Christian era, and although the Jews were prohibited by the Mosaic Law either from becoming or from employing artists, there were many, no doubt, scattered throughout Palestine, engaged in painting portraits of wealthy Greeks and Romans. Tradition declares that Luke the Evangelist was an artist, and that he painted a portrait of our Lord from life (see illustration); there exists an emerald, also, with the likeness of Christ upon it, which, it was declared, was cut by command of Tiberius Cæsar, and given by the Sultan of the Turks to

Page xiv.

Likeness attributed to St Luke.

(*By permission of the Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge.*)

Pope Innocent VIII. for the redemption of his brother, then a captive in the hands of the Christians.

A more interesting tradition is that which connects the likeness of Christ with the impression made by His features upon cloth. There are two very famous legends in this connection—that of King Agbarus, and that of Veronica. The Agbarus legend is as follows: Agbarus, King of Edessa, having been smitten with leprosy, and hearing of the wonderful power of Christ as a healer, wrote a letter to Christ entreating Him to come to his relief. This he sent by the hand of a servant called Ananias, who was a skilful painter, and commissioned him, if he failed to persuade Christ to return with him, at least to bring back His likeness with him. Ananias, when he finds Christ, is not able to reach Him because of the crowds, and is in the act of painting His portrait when he is recognised and sent for by Christ, who writes a reply to the letter of Agbarus. Seeing that Ananias still lingers, Jesus calls for water, and having washed His face, He wipes it on a cloth, on which, by His divine power, there remained a perfect portrait of His features. This He gives to Ananias, who, returning with it to Edessa, hands it to his master, who is instantly cured. The Veronica legend passes through various changes, but the usual and later form is as follows: Veronica's house stood on the way to Calvary. Seeing Jesus pass on His way to be crucified, her heart was filled with pity, and taking her veil from her head, she gave it to Him to wipe His face. When He returned it to her it was found that the veil retained a perfect likeness of His features. (See illustration.)

Intensely interesting as these, and all similar traditions of their class, may be, they must all be dismissed as

unreliable. The "higher criticism," which exists in Art as well as in Theology, declares all these supposed portraits to belong to a much later date. No trustworthy portrait of the Face of Christ *painted while He was on earth* exists. If there ever was such a portrait it has been lost. At the seventh General Council, held at Constantinople in 754, all the pictures declared to have come *direct from Christ and His apostles* were condemned.

II

With this admission the question—whether or no we have a reliable likeness of Christ—is not yet decided. A likeness may be painted from *description, or from recollection of a person's appearance.* When Christ no longer walked amongst men, and when the remembrance of His features was beginning to fade, what more likely, or natural, than that the disciples should strive to retain His likeness, and through Art possess a living impression of them? There were artists living in those days in great numbers; doubtless some of them became Christians; what more likely than that they should employ their Art in this direction? When we turn to Art, also, we are immediately arrested by the striking resemblance which runs through all the paintings of Christ from century to century. What does this mean? Does it mean that there was an original portrait which has now been lost, from which our present likeness has been copied, or that gradually a type of feature was accepted which became the conventional likeness, and which now all artists accept?

Let us begin with the arguments in favour of our present likeness being authentic. These may be summed up in the following way:—

Page xvi.

VERONICA. St Silvestro, Rome.

(*By permission of the Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge.*)

1. There is, and from the earliest times there has been, an accepted type of feature which men know as the likeness of Christ. This likeness is consistent with great variety of handling, according to the genius of the painter and the country and age in which he lived; nevertheless the likeness remains from century to century.

2. It is most natural to expect that as the memory of our Lord's appearance faded, His followers would desire to possess some memorial which would recall His Face to their memory.

3. There were numerous artists in every city at the dawn of the Christian era, and the years immediately following the introduction of Christianity saw portrait-painting carried to its highest excellence.

4. The earliest Christian Art, namely, that of the Catacombs of Rome, shows that this likeness existed during the earliest times.

5. This likeness—which bears the stamp of true portraiture—was painted over the graves of the martyrs by men who expected the immediate return of Christ, and who believed that they would recognise His Face.

From these arguments it is urged that the balance of evidence is in favour of the likeness of Christ being authentic, so that when we behold His features as represented by Art, we have some conception of what Christ was like when He appeared amongst men.

III

Let us turn now to the argument from the other side.

The first fact upon which we have to fix is the strange reserve of the Evangelists. From the first chapter of Matthew to the last in Revelation no word is spoken,

no hint even is given, as to the personal appearance of Jesus Christ.

Outside of Scripture there is a famous letter, purporting to having been written to the Senate of Rome by Publius Lentulus, a friend of Pilate, and giving a full description of Christ's appearance. The letter runs thus :—

"In this time appeared a man, who lives till now, a man endowed with great powers. Men call Him a great prophet; His own disciples term Him the Son of God. His name is Jesus Christ. He restores the dead to life, and cures the sick of all manners of diseases. This man is of a noble and well-proportioned stature, with a face full of kindness and firmness, so that the beholders both love Him and fear Him. His hair is the colour of wine [probably meaning yellow] and golden at the root—straight and without lustre—but from the level of the ears curling and glossy, and divided down the centre after the fashion of the Nazarenes [Nazarites]. His forehead is even and smooth, His face without blemish, and enhanced by a tempered bloom; His countenance ingenuous and kind; His beard is full, of the same colour as His hair, and forked in form; His eyes blue and extremely brilliant. In reproof and rebuke He is formidable; in exhortation and teaching gentle and amiable of tongue. None have seen Him to laugh, but many on the contrary to weep. His person is tall; His hands beautiful and straight. In speaking He is deliberate and grave, and little given to loquacity. In beauty surpassing most men."

If this letter were genuine it would be a priceless document, but, alas! it is too clearly a forgery, and was probably composed in the fourth century.

When we turn now to the testimony of the early Fathers of the Church, two conclusions are forced upon us. First, that they are all alike ignorant of the existence of any authentic likeness of Christ. Influenced by Old

Page xviii.

FRESCO. Roman Type of Christ.

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Testament prophecy, for instance, they mostly agree in declaring that *Christ was without personal beauty;* and so completely did this view dominate the early Church, that Celsus made it the subject of attack and ridicule. The second conclusion is, that the early Church, influenced by the Jewish law, regarded it as *impious to portray Christ in His purely human aspect.*

The following quotation, from the fourth century, will illustrate both of these conclusions. The Empress Helena, having sent to Eusebius of Cæsarea asking him to send her a likeness of Christ, Eusebius replies "that if she means an image of the frail mortal flesh which He bore before His Ascension, such images are forbidden in the Mosaic Law, and are nowhere to be found in the churches." He goes on to say: "Some poor woman brought me two painted figures like philosophers, and ventured to say that they represented Paul and the Saviour—I do not know on what ground. But to save her and others from offence, I took them from her and kept them by me, not thinking it right, in any case, that she should exhibit them further, that we may not seem idolaters to carry our God about with us."

So much for the testimony of the Fathers; let us turn now to the Catacombs, those underground tombs and cells where the early Christians were buried, and where Christian Art—preserved from the ravages of sun and air, and from the assaults of heathen and Vandal—alone is to be found. Here, if anywhere a likeness of Christ exist, it is to be sought for. The late Sir Wyke Bayliss, in a book entitled "Rex Regum," has laboured assiduously to prove that the Catacombs yield such evidence. His special pleading is interesting but unconvincing. The earliest pictures of Christ in the Catacombs are not attempts at portraiture, but

are ideal and symbolic in character. "It is evident," says Lanciani, in his "Pagan and Ancient Rome," "that the Christian painters or sculptors of the first three centuries, in drawing or modelling the head of Jesus, had no intention of making a likeness, but only a conventional type, noble and classic, and suggestive of the eternal youth of the Word." By far the most popular of these symbolic representations is that of Christ as the Good Shepherd. He appears as a typical shepherd of the Campagna, with short tunic and wallet, youthful and unbearded, usually carrying a lamb upon His shoulder. The most beautiful of these is that found in the tomb of St Callistus, and now preserved in the Lateran Museum at Rome, an illustration of which we give. Sometimes, instead of the lamb, the Good Shepherd is represented as carrying a kid, a circumstance which it will be remembered inspired one of Matthew Arnold's most beautiful sonnets.

About the middle of the fourth century artists began to pass from the classic type, and in their treatment of the Christ Face sought to portray what they imagined to be His actual appearance. They first introduced the beard, then the hair parted in the middle, and so gradually there was created a conventional likeness, which became stereotyped in the hands of the Byzantine workers, and which has been handed down, and, as we shall see, more or less followed, until the present day.

IV

From a consideration of these arguments, then, the conclusion we come to—however reluctantly—is this, that the idea that an authentic likeness of Christ exists can only be

Page xx. *Alinari.*

Christ as the Good Shepherd.

accepted with the greatest reservation—so great, indeed, as to amount to improbability. However we may regret this from one aspect, as far as Art is concerned it is a matter for thanksgiving. The possession of an actual likeness would have stifled Art, and would have imprisoned the religious imagination. Instead of calling forth the activity of their highest powers of thought and expression, artists would have been condemned to an endless repetition of the same features. The paralysing effect of this we can trace in the Byzantine Art which followed; and it was only at the Renaissance that artists entered into possession of liberty, and set out unfettered to give to Christ's person their own ideal and their highest expression of perfect manhood.

V

While thus Art is without direct knowledge regarding our Lord as He appeared upon earth, there are certain inferences regarding His personal appearance which no one who reverently reads the gospel narrative can fail to make. "Historically we know,"[1] says Keim, "that the homage paid by antiquity to the Saviour in the glorification of His flesh, while we curtail its details, is right upon the whole. . . . It is plain that His was a manly, commanding, prophetic Figure. The people, so much at the mercy of outward impressions, could not otherwise have greeted Him, and the reproach of His foes would else have attacked Him, even on the side of bodily defects. Besides, we have the fact lying before us that His appearance on the scene, His word, His voice, His eye, seized and shook the beholders and hearers; that many men, women, and children felt happy at His feet and in His

[1] Keim, "Life of Christ," vol. ii. p. 193.

presence. His vigour of health is proved by the wearing restlessness of His life, and by the daily expenditure of strength, both of mind and body, demanded by the stormy importunity of the mental and physical misery of Israel."

THE CHRIST FACE IN ART

CHAPTER I

The Dawn

"Thou shalt see the King in His beauty."

The Face of Christ may well be regarded as the most exacting test of Art. To blend divine majesty with human pity, to paint a Face that will satisfy at once the imagination of the artist, and the feelings of the devout, is a task which none but the greatest could attempt, and in which the greatest could hope only partially to succeed.

Around the Face of the Redeemer, sacred art revolves as the planetary system revolves around the sun. From century to century artists have striven to reach the ideal, and to enrich the hearts of men by painting the Face of Him who came as the Light of the World, and whose Light is the Life of men.

No nobler task than this could be conceived, and none more exacting, for when all that the genius of men could do has been realised, the end is not reached. No figure in history is so dominating or so elusive as the figure of Jesus Christ. No Face

in Art allures men as the Face of Him of Nazareth; yet all the efforts of genius to give to that Face a perfect form has failed—failed not through lack of genius, but because the subject is beyond genius. While each great master adds his conception, each generation and school its type, the subject remains as before unexhausted and inexhaustible. Beautiful and worthy as many of these conceptions are, we say as we regard them singly or collectively, "Christ was all this, and more."

Yet, while the subject is inexhaustible, it remains the one subject which calls forth the noblest powers of the artist; it is the source of his highest inspiration, and is the test not only of his truthfulness and sincerity as artist, but also of his character as man.

In this respect the study of the Face of Christ in Art becomes an intensely interesting study in psychology as well as in painting; it is a study in character as well as in artistic genius. For as the artist paints the Face of Christ the secrets of his own nature come out, and he is judged—judged as artist and as man. The beatitude which declares that the pure in heart alone can see God, works in the realms of Art as in the spiritual life; and it has been given, not to those of the cunning hand, but to the lowly and the pure-hearted, to enter through the hidden portals and to gain the vision.

Thus even in Art no one can reveal Christ with-

out self-revelation. It is true, of course, that all Art is self-revelation, but here the revelation goes deeper and is more certain. The artist reveals what he is in his own soul, how he stands in relation to Him before whose eyes all things are naked and open. The skill of the artist, therefore, when he comes to paint the Face of Christ, will not hide the shallowness of the character if such exists; and it may be possible to detect no fault in the one while deploring the other. To attain success in such an effort, purity of heart and spiritual vision are no less necessary than artistic skill.

Our joyful task, then, is to go from century to century, from school to school, and gather their choicest works; to see how this subject is representative of the Art of each period and the mind of each artist; how in its turn the subject has been influenced by the great Art movements and by national and individual characteristics. This task will introduce us to the greatest names, the greatest epochs, and the greatest works in the painter's art.

The history of Christian Art does not really begin until the thirteenth century of the Christian era. During that long period the Church had to pass though ceaseless struggles and experiences before those conditions in which painting flourishes could be reached. During the early centuries the Church was engaged in a life and death struggle with the

Roman Empire and with the various Pagan cults. Hidden in the Catacombs, meeting only by stealth in private houses or in the open fields, in constant fear of persecution, and liable at any moment to be dragged before the magistrate, these early Christians could find no room in the stern necessities of their life for the softer pursuits of the Arts. When at length Constantine sounded the call to disarm, and gave freedom to the persecuted Church, a new danger arose from a totally different quarter. The Church had next to engage in a life and death struggle with heresy. The primitive gospel had to be encrusted in creed and dogma, the Church had to define its faith, had to formulate its articles, and to settle its constitution. These were days of fierce quarrels, of embittered rivalries, and even of faction fights, when the streets of Alexandria were filled with a mob of fanatical and rival monks, and when the sanctity of her Churches was often disturbed by scenes of riot and bloodshed. When at length the Church had finally ejected those heresies which threatened her with disruption, and peace reigned within her borders, there came that event which so profoundly moved the men of the Middle Ages—the fall of the Roman Empire. With its destruction there disappeared that sense of security and buoyant hopefulness which are necessary conditions for the pursuit of Art. Ceaseless wars devastated Europe, disturbed trade, arrested exchange,

rent communities into small and isolated fragments, and made the art of war the ceaseless occupation of the people. With this disappearance of the visible seat of authority, and the loss of the sense of security, a profound gloom settled upon the minds of men. The Roman Empire had lasted so long, had displayed a grandeur so august, had survived so many shocks, that it seemed to be rooted in the foundations of the world; and when at last the huge, but now enfeebled mass toppled over, and came crashing to the ground, it appeared as if the world were coming to an end. Men's thoughts, instead of being directed to the beauty of the visible universe, to the conquest of nature, or the growth of knowledge, were forced inward. The world, their teachers declared, was drawing near its end; times were waxing late; so it became them to turn away from all earthly things, and to wait for that awful disruption which, to their minds, darkened by ignorance and terrifying superstitions, seemed impending. Through all these dark and haunted centuries, Art was only a history of "tentative efforts and weak survivals." Artists there were of a kind, but they were under the servitude of the Church; they were enslaved, as all others were, by its terrifying prohibitions and savage austerities. All aspirations toward freedom of treatment or originality of conception were instantly and harshly repressed; the subject and the manner of treatment were alike defined; and thus manacled,

artists became mere lifeless imitators, the soulless slaves of conventional types.

Through this long period the conception of the Face of Christ became fixed and stereotyped. At first, as we have seen, the earliest types are purely ideal. The Saviour is represented as a youth, full of grace, and usually bearing the lamb upon His shoulder. This has been taken by the late Dean Farrar to prove the joyfulness and radiant hopefulness of the early Church, but it was also a concession to pagan ideas. The early Christians realised how repulsive to the Gentile world would appear the idea of worshipping a crucified Jew; so to the neophyte, not yet liberated from pagan ideas, they presented the Saviour in a form which was familiar and attractive. When Christianity had established itself against paganism, and the need of making such concessions to popular ideas was no longer pressing, artists were then at liberty to work out a conception more in keeping with what they conceived as our Lord's actual appearance when on earth. This conception, which began in a rudimentary way in the Catacombs, took at length a settled form, and reached its full splendour in the hands of the Byzantine mosaic-workers of the sixth to the ninth century.

One of the most beautiful of these mosaics is that of St Appollinare Nuova in Ravenna. This mosaic belongs, it is conjectured, to the seventh

Page 6. *Alinari.*

Christ Enthroned. Mosaic, 7th Century.

century, and possesses the characteristic features of the mediæval conception of the Face of Christ. The prevailing tone is that of the sufferer, the face is thin and careworn, the eyes look out with a haunting sadness. For centuries this became the fixed type; in each there were repeated the same characteristics—broad forehead, arched eyebrows, straight nose, dark eyes, kind and serious mouth, long hair falling down upon the shoulders, and pointed beard. The paintings of this period are dull and expressionless; they never vary; through these long dark centuries, artists were the servants or drudges of ecclesiastics. Prohibited from looking at things as they were, from giving expression to their sense of beauty or their perceptions of truth, with imagination proscribed, and originality repressed, they sunk at last in their heavy bondage into that last stage of slavery when man ceases even to desire to be set free. The world, however, is equal to its destiny. These dark ages, as we have been taught to term them, were in reality times of preparation. The inrush of the Goths into western Europe, and the overthrow of the Roman Empire, instead of sounding the doom of the world, was God's plan of saving it. The Goths swept away the old, corrupt, and effete civilisation of Rome, and although they tore up everything in their path, they prepared the way for a new and richer growth. So slowly beneath the surface throughout these centuries the

great Spring-tide, the revival of Art and industry, was being prepared.

"There is a day in Spring
When under all the earth the secret germs
Begin to stir and glow before they bud.
The wealth and pomp of midsummer
Lie in the heart of that inglorious hour
Which no man names with blessing though its work
Is blessed by all the world. Such days there are
In the slow story of the growth of souls."—WORDSWORTH.

Such days there were in the history of Art, when, the dark night having passed, there burst upon the world the glorious dawn of the Renaissance.

This is the period when the human mind, waking from its long slumber, burst the chains which bound it; when Art, daring to look at things as they are, and not as it had been forced to regard them, entered at last upon her goodly heritage, and made mighty strides forward in all things pertaining to her realm; when the Face of Christ became to artists a supreme subject in Art.

The causes which produced this wonderful revival are many and various. Some of them are obvious, others are too remote to be discovered. From the thirteenth to the fifteenth centuries, however, there occurred a series of great discoveries, great inventions, and great writers. Gradually the grip of the ecclesiastic was relaxed, and the minds of men were directed away from the exclusive pursuit of theology to the arts and sciences. The

fall of Constantinople, the break up of the old Byzantine kingdom, the discovery of gunpowder and printing, the influence of the Pisanos in sculpture, of Giotto in painting, of Dante in literature, all contributed to the emancipation of the intellect, and helped to give momentum to the movement. But greatest name of all is that of St Francis of Assisi, one of the purest saints who ever trod this earth. It is not too much to say of him that he "opened the prison doors to them that were bound." The world listened to his preaching, first incredulous, then enraptured; a tremulous throb of awakened life passed through the hearts of men, and hope and joy were begotten in the world. The century which followed was a century of spiritual rapture. Of old, men had said with bowed head and heavy heart, "The world is very evil, the times are waxing late"; now with upraised eyes and laughter on their lips they cried, "Why, how beautiful the world is!" Artists were not long in feeling the thrill of joy that was passing through the world. There arose first of all a bitter distaste toward the old lifeless productions. How to reach naturalness they did not know; everything had to be learned from the beginning, but into this task they threw themselves with the most joyous abandon. At first progress was slow, but gradually artists began to give life to the old Byzantine forms: they moved round the head of the Madonna; they attempted to place in her arms a

real Child; they softened the hard, staring eyes in the pictures they painted of Christ; the Face becomes more expressive, the drapery more natural, and the colour more agreeable. Margaritone at Arezzo, Cimabue at Florence, Duccio at Sienna were each precursors of the dawn; but the name which stands out before all others as an emancipator is that of Giotto, who has justly been described as the first of modern painters.

Born in 1276 near Florence, little is known of his early life. He was a pupil of Cimabue's, and the story is told that, as a shepherd boy, tending his father's sheep, he amused himself by drawing them on the ground with a pointed stone. One day he was surprised in the act by Cimabue, who, attracted by his skill, invited him to enter his studio. Thus his career as artist began, and it did not end before he had revolutionised Art. "His first aim," says Lord Lindsay, "was to infuse new life into traditional compositions by substituting the heads, attitudes, and draperies of the actual world, for the spectral forms and conventional types of the Byzantine painters; and his second to vindicate the right of modern Europe to feel and judge for herself."

To perceive the new spirit which, with Giotto, entered into art, the reader has only to compare the nobly impressive figure of Christ in the accompanying illustration with any of the old Byzantine crea-

Page 10. *Anderson.*

GIOTTO. Christ Enthroned.

tions. For six hundred years the Byzantine Christ with hard staring eyes, had looked down upon the worshippers from the vaulted apse of the Basilica, His hand raised to bless, but His face sorrowful and austere. And as the suppliants kneeling below, gazed up at this Figure, so mysterious and so remote, they turned from Him in silent awe, and sought, by penance and prayer, an escape as from an impending doom. In this "Christ Enthroned" however, we recognise the entrance of those qualities which give the stamp of naturalness to all Giotto's creations. The stilted figure, the expressionless eyes, the lifeless pose of the Byzantine types disappear; the Saviour now becomes in art a living person, not a theological idea; He looks out from the canvas, not with dull gaze as if brooding upon His own sufferings, and concerned with things remote, but with the tender look of one who is the King of Love, and the Shepherd and Bishop of our souls. And this success Giotto has gained without the sacrifice of dignity or impressiveness. "By subtle adaptation of the proportion of the various parts, of the angels to Christ, of Christ to the throne He occupies, of the throne itself to the cusped arch which limits the design, Giotto succeeds in combining the effect of a real scene with that of a more than human presence. In the portrayal of Christ, he summons the whole weight of Byzantine tradition to his aid, availing himself of the peculiar and mysterious religious

impressiveness, which was attained by their hereditary art. But Cardinal Stefanesch, who kneels at Christ's feet, and who is portrayed to the life with exquisite felicity, reveals how completely the Byzantine tradition has been naturalised. The imaginative creations of the past are as real to Giotto as the natural facts of the present; and, without offering violation to either, he sets them in due relation side by side." [1]

The influence of Giotto upon contemporary painting is incalculable. He brought artists out of the gloomy crypts of cathedrals into the open air; his first occupation as a boy of drawing living things as they appeared in Nature was a prophecy of what he was afterwards to perform for painting itself. He gave his compositions vitality; his figures throb with life; he strove to catch varying shades of emotion, he introduced gesture and action; and although he was ignorant of many things in the painter's art, he helped to open the doors, at least, for the mighty to enter in.

It is of interest to know that Giotto enjoyed the friendship of Dante, and the friendship could not fail to be of value to both. The admiration of the great poet is expressed in the "Purg.," xl. 93.

> "Once Cimabue seemed to hold full sure
> His own against all art; now Giotto bears
> The palm, and this man's fame doth that obscure."

[1] Giotto, by Selincourt. P. 86.

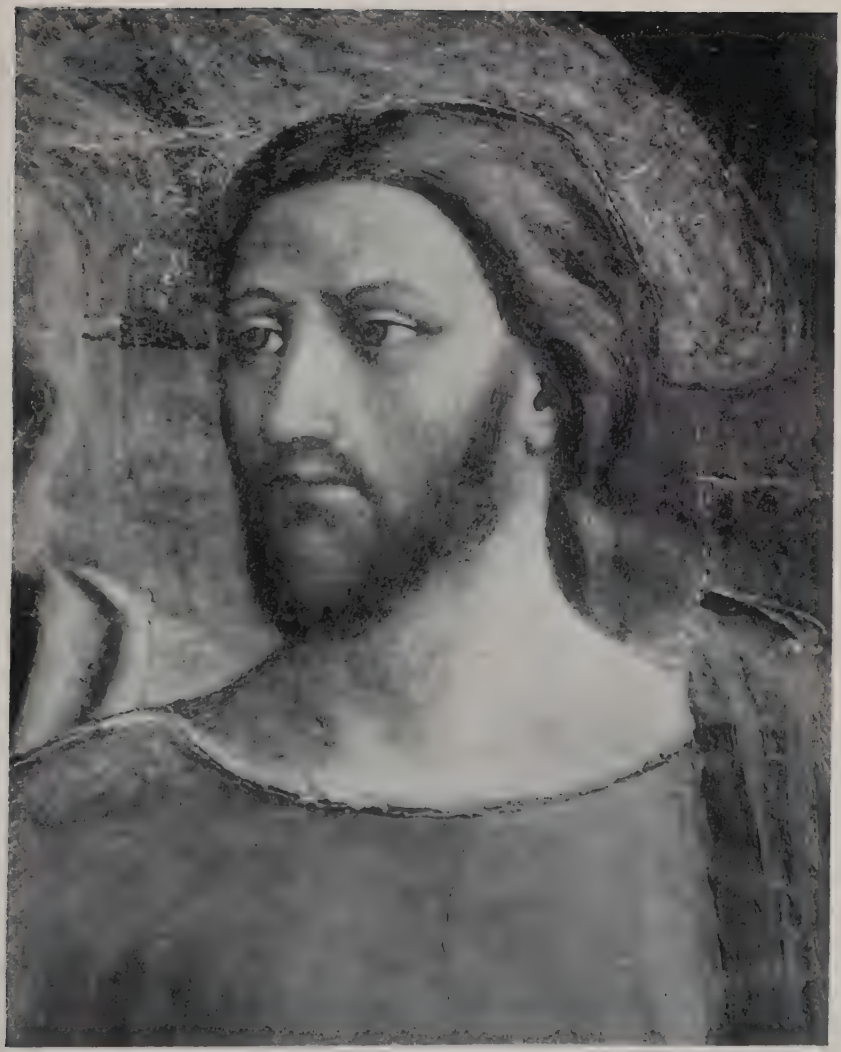
One other artist who produced an interesting type of the Face of Christ, and who stands alongside Giotto as an emancipator in the history of Art, is Masaccio. During the century which separates these two great names, artists had been slowly and painfully struggling to produce more naturally, and to gain command over the technical processes of painting. Art was still archaic and insipid, still ignorant and clumsy, and it required the robust personality and virile inspiration of Masaccio to break the remaining chains and open the way for all the glorious works which were to follow. In the works of Masaccio, artists learned how to show things in perspective, they learned how to draw the human figure, and for the first time in Art an animated group was represented with fidelity and variety of expression.

Our illustration is taken from his famous painting of "Christ and the Tribute Money," a painting in which his power of expressing varying emotion, and of grouping a number of figures in a natural way, is admirably illustrated. With regard to the Christ Face, however, with which we are more immediately concerned, it is of interest to notice that with Masaccio the regnant and Pontiff Christ, the Christ of the Mosaics and Basilicas, now disappears from art. With Giotto much of the Byzantine inspiration remained, with Masaccio it almost totally disappears. Christ descends now from His throne where for

centuries He has been seated, and walks amongst men.

A like change has come over the treatment by artists of Christ's features. The lifeless imitation of preceding types has been discarded, and though the conventional features are retained,—the broad forehead, dark eyes, long hair falling upon the shoulders, and pointed beard,—yet the artist claims the right to modify these at his will, and to introduce into his treatment of the Christ Face every varying form of expression. It will be noticed in the illustrations which follow that while on the whole artists remain true to the conventional likeness of Christ as accepted by art, they become less and less hampered by tradition, until they reach out at last to perfect freedom.

It is pitiful to think that Masaccio perished at the early age of twenty-seven. He left Florence for Rome in 1429, and was never seen or heard of by his family again. The story is told, and it seems to have been generally accepted, that he died by poison. What he might have done had life been spared to him it is vain to discuss. He takes his place amongst those lives—and alas! they are not few in history—which burst forth in youth into richest blossoming, but which are cut down before they reach maturity, leaving to the world along with gain, a saddening sense of loss. Before Masaccio had set out on that fatal journey to Rome, however, he had broken



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MASACCIO. Christ and the Tribute Money.

the last fetters which held artists bound to the conventionalism of the past. The gate now was open and the way was free, and joyously men pressed in thereat, each striving to reach the palace of the beautiful and the true.

CHAPTER II

Early Renaissance

"Jesus Christ of Heaven
In a poor man's apparell, pursueth us ever."

In the early period of Christian Art, painters confine themselves almost entirely to religious subjects, and aim almost exclusively at teaching religious truths. "We are teachers to unlearned men," they said, "of the marvels done by the power and strength of holy religion." This subordination of Art to the religious sentiment produced a school of idealists, dwellers in dreamland, who sought to portray incidents, not from the standpoint of reality, but from the outlook of the imagination.

It is to the Christ of these saintly men of Art to which now we turn. In their treatment of the Christ Face we shall see that it is not beauty they aim at but holiness. For the thought of Christ fills their minds, and the love of Christ their hearts, and though they see Him not yet they feel that He is near them—"nearer to them than breathing, and closer than hands or feet."

Of all the artists of this early school the greatest is Fra Angelico (1387-1455), a monk of the

Dominican Order, and the saint of artists. Vasari's "Life" contains the following passage which will best describe him:—

"Fra Giovanni—afterwards called Fra Angelico—was a simple man, and most holy in his walk. He shunned all things of this world, lived a pure and saintly life, and was such a friend to the poor that I think his soul must now be in Heaven. He exercised himself continually in painting, but would paint nothing but sacred subjects. . . . It was his custom never to mend or retouch anything of his, but to leave it always as it came at first attempt, believing—as he used to say—that this was the will of God. Some relate that Fra Giovanni would not put his hand to pencil without giving himself first to prayer. He never painted Christ on the Cross but his cheeks were bathed in tears."

Few men have lived more blamelessly, few have possessed a disposition more pure or saintly than this artist-knight who lived without reproach, and who when dead received the title of the "Blessed." So little of the world had he in his disposition that, when offered a bishopric by the Pope and earnestly pressed to accept it, he again and again excused himself, urging that "he who practises the art of painting has need of quiet, and should live without cares and anxieties"; and that "he who would do the work of Christ must dwell continually with Him." Happily for us his will prevailed, and, undis-

tracted by the cares of office, and untempted by the world, he lived his life in cloistered retreats, and gave to the world in pure and gentle art his visions of that celestial world in which his spirit daily wandered. On the walls of San Marco in Florence, where he lived for nine years, his greatest work is to be found ; and there all lovers of Art and of saintliness gather as to a shrine, and in presence of his ideal forms are carried away from the murk and gloom of a sinful world into that realm of pure delight, "where saints immortal dwell."

The illustration which we give of this saintly artist's work is taken from one of the most beautiful and spiritual pictures in the world. It is a picture of Jesus as the pilgrim being met by the Emmaus disciples, whom the artist represents as Dominican monks. Fra Angelico painted this in the Convent of San Marco, over the door in the Refectory by which the weary pilgrims entered for rest and refreshment. It expresses a thought dear to the men of the Middle Ages, the thought that, as they fed the poor and hungry, Jesus Himself might appear and be their Guest. The Face of Christ is full of the tenderest sympathy, and into it Fra Angelico has thrown all the intense love of his sweet and gracious nature. It is a Face one learns to love, not for its artistic beauty, but for its tender simplicity. It does not satisfy one's idea of the actual Christ as He appeared amongst men—no painter has done this, or ever will

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Alinari.

FRA ANGELICO. Christ and the Emmaus Pilgrims.

—but it satisfies at least one's conception of that characteristic in the nature of Christ most dear to all our hearts—His loving kindness. So, gentle and kindly of aspect the risen Saviour stands, clad in camel's hair, and holding the pilgrim's staff in His hand. He seems to be searching the eyes of the two disciples to see if they recognise Him. His hat has fallen over His shoulders, for the day has been hot, and the evening breeze is cool and refreshing. The two pilgrims eagerly entreat Him to abide with them, for the day is far spent, and the night is at hand: they hold His hand and His arm, and would fain constrain Him to enter, who, though making as though He would go further, is not unwilling to be constrained. No painter has entered into the heart of this most beautiful narrative as the saintly friar has done. His faith, so simple yet so unerring, has enabled him to give his conception a gracious spiritual reality. The thought of Christ's condescension was dear to his own heart; he knew not when he might turn his head and find Him in his cell, and finding Him there he would not have been surprised; for he possessed the real Presence, not as in mystical sacraments possessed through material symbols magically changed, but in a gracious and hourly companionship sharer of all his thoughts. So the Face which the holy brother transfers to canvas is not that of the Christ of the legends or the schools; it is the Face of the gentle Jesus, meek

and mild; dear to the child heart of the artist-saint, and dear to all child natures the world over.

An objection which one constantly hears, standing before such paintings is, that they do not represent the incident "as it really happened." This may be instantly acknowledged. The Emmaus pilgrims were certainly not Dominican monks; it is scarcely probable that our Lord wore a garment of camel's hair; by no possible stretch of the imagination could it be conceived that the little mound upon which Christ stands in Angelico's picture of the "Transfiguration" is a veritable mountain; and certainly the lay figures which he introduces were not witnesses of the scene. Such criticism, however, is based upon complete ignorance of the true function of Art. Fra Angelico was not an antiquarian, and it was not necessary to his art that he should become one. To depict Scripture scenes it is not necessary for each artist to make a pilgrimage to Palestine, to introduce its landscape, its architecture, and the features of its inhabitants. All these external accessories may be reproduced with absolute fidelity, and yet the painting remain totally unconvincing. The fact that Perugino introduces into Scriptural scenes an Umbrian landscape, or that Raphael gives to the "Espousals of the Virgin" the background of St Peter's, or that Murillo paints his Madonnas with a Spanish type of feature, in no way invalidates the truthfulness of what each is striving to depict. If

literal truth were imposed upon art then who could depict any Scripture scene "as it actually happened"? Even if Fra Angelico could have so vanquished the difficulties of time and space and been true to fact, his work would have remained totally unconvincing to the people of his own day and generation whom he sought to instruct. The foreign landscape and the strange type of feature would have awakened curiosity in some, and criticism in others, but in none would they have awakened feelings of devotion or awe. In such an age as Angelico lived in it was necessary to convey spiritual impressions by bringing Scripture incidents into contact with the common life around him, and by interpreting them from the belief current in his own day and generation. Fortunately the simple monk was untroubled by any such anxieties. The Scripture stories were intensely real to him, and he interpreted them in the spirit and according to the beliefs of his age, and through the medium of his actual surroundings. As he lay upon his simple couch he dreamt of Paradise, and suddenly his humble cell was filled with light ineffable, and around him there gathered the "bright seraphim in burning row." He saw the angels with wide wings soaring in the high vault of Heaven, or hymning their praises in the shadowless groves of Paradise. As his mind dwelt on the holy narratives he saw the events happening around him—in Fiesole, or without the city gates, or within the monastery's

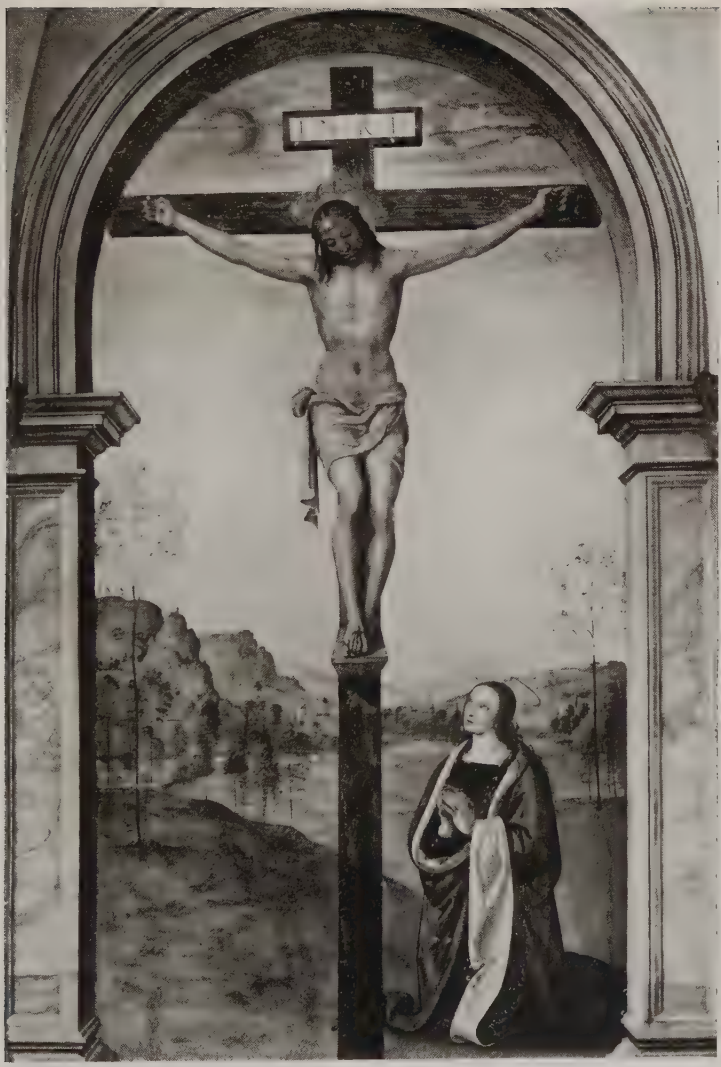
sequestered walls. His angel of the Annunciation, as he comes with his wondrous message, finds Mary not a Jewish maiden of Nazareth, but a Florentine nun sitting in cloistered retreat near the humble cell where she spends her days in fasting and in prayer. If anyone seek an interpretation of "things as they actually happened" he will turn from such a work in despair; but if he seek a realisation of the great spiritual idea which dominates the event, then here it is, shining through the archaic forms, true to the eternal spirit which lies hidden from the wise and prudent in every Scripture incident, but which is revealed unto babes.

The truth is, if we are to understand this early Christian Art—or indeed any Art—we must possess the gifts of sympathy and imagination. Sympathy wherewith to enter into the mind and feeling of the artist, to see through his eyes and to feel with his heart, to judge his work not from our standpoint but from his; and imagination to think ourselves back to the century in which he lived, to the conditions of life and thought which prevailed, to the aspirations which moved men's hearts, and to the difficulties which confronted their lives. The casual visitor to our National Gallery, for instance, will pause before Margaritone's Madonna and Child, if he pause at all, only to wonder why anything so gaunt and forbidding should occupy a place in such a collection; but the art student regards it, and that

of Cimabue's beside it, with intensest sympathy and interest. He sees here the birth of a great movement, the first feeble efforts of Art in its infancy striving to find expression; and crude as these efforts are, he looks with greater reverence upon these pictures than upon many more finished productions. When, then, we call these gifts of sympathy and imagination to our aid, and regard the works of the saintly Dominican who lived in daily contact with the Christ, whose sufferings he painted through the mist of tears, we feel that we are lifted into a realm of truth and sanctity, of faith and heavenly mindedness, and of joy in all things beautiful and fair.

Hardly less famous as an interpreter of the religious sentiment is Perugino (1446-1524), who received this name on account of his settling in Perugia, a little town in Umbria. There, in what has been called the Galilee of Italy, he founded an academy, and drew to it, for a time, one who, in the realms of Art, was far to outshine his master—the young Raphael. Umbria is dominated by the hill of Assisi, and is steeped in memories of St Francis. Here, with the traditions of his saintly life kept ever fresh, Art remained for long religious in subject and in spirit. Artists delighted in painting scenes of peaceful beauty, and faces expressing spiritual rapture. With pure and quiet eyes they looked out upon the world, dreaming of Paradise, and seeing in vision those angelic forms which it was their delight to paint.

In Perugino we have those characteristics allied to great artistic excellence. His colouring is warm and transparent, and his composition, though stiff and conventional, is yet pleasing; while his influence upon his contemporaries was very great. It was said that no pupils ever imitated a master more closely than did those of Perugino. The great charm of his pictures is their stillness. The angels hymn their praises in an unclouded sky; the silver waters glide through the restful valleys waveless and quiet; no noise or rude alarm breaks in upon the ear; the trees stand motionless as if in prayer; the very fields appear conscious of God; while the hills, steeped in peace, seem to bow their heads in adoration. This other-worldliness appears in his figures no less than in his landscapes; he delighted in painting chaste and God-fraught Madonnas; suffering saints in meek submission, or sighing for Paradise; angels with their lutes hymning praises to the most High. His mannerisms cause all his work to be readily recognised, and anyone having grasped the elements of his style can tell a Perugino almost at a glance, nevertheless he remains a great inspirer of artists and teacher of men. As it has been beautifully said, "What this artist seemed to have aimed at, was to create for the soul amid the pomps and passions of this world a resting-place of contemplation tenanted by saintly and seraphic beings. No pain comes near the folk of his celestial



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PERUGINO. The Crucifixion.

city; no longing poisons their repose; they are not weary, and the wicked trouble them no more. Their cheerfulness is no less perfect than their serenity; like the shades of Hellas they have drunk Lethean waters from the river of content, and all remembrance of things sad or harsh has vanished from their minds."

Nowhere are those characteristics more apparent than in this study of the Crucifixion, painted on the wall of the Chapter House in the Convent of Santa Maria Madalena, in Florence. This painting, which is justly regarded as Perugino's greatest work, occupies a whole wall, and is divided by pilasters into three panels. In the centre is the crucified Christ with the Magdalene kneeling at the foot of the Cross; on the right are St John and St Benedict; while the left is occupied by the Madonna and St Bernard.

There is nothing in this picture to suggest the violent emotions which were let loose on that day when the earth was rent with convulsions; when the infuriated mob, drunk with lust of blood, crowded the way to Calvary, and rent the air with their hoarse and brutal cries; when in awful loneliness the voice of the Christ was heard saying, "My God! My God! why hast Thou forsaken Me?" and when those who loved Him swooned at sight of His agony. Here there is no mob, no wasting grief, no unavailing sorrow; all is as peaceful as if the benediction of

God had just fallen across the world. The Saviour's Cross stands out against a sky, not lowering and tempestuous, but clear, save where the sunset glow bathes it with a soft and ineffable light. All the land lies in still repose—the mountains in the distance are steeped in purple mist, the trees stand motionless against the sky, the waters glide silently along, while over all the scene there falls a hush as of silent prayer. The figure of the Christ is nobly drawn; widespread are the arms as if to welcome all the sons of men to His forgiveness. Now all is finished, and the wearied head is gently inclined as if in rest; but no grief mars the Face, no heart-rending sorrow tears the hearts of those who stand and adore, or kneel and pray. At the foot of the Cross the Magdalene bends, with face on which all traces of sin have been wiped away, and which adoration lights up with spiritual beauty; even the sword-wound in the suffering Mother's heart has already healed, and the anguish of loss has been forgotten in the knowledge of victory. It is not then the day of the Cross which Pietro Perugino set himself to interpret, but the revelation of its mercy, and the spiritual contents of its redeeming love, and no one can look upon it without joy and devout rapture.

Our next illustration presents us now with a very different, but with no less interesting a type of the Christ Face. Fra Angelico and Perugino represent

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VERROCCHIO. Baptism of Christ.

the gentle life. The Christ they love to paint is gentle and contemplative. Verrocchio, who was more famous as a sculptor than a painter, has the sculptor's energy and admiration of physical strength. In the breadth and massiveness of the figure, and in the rugged force of the features, we see here something of the man who was a living force in Art, a teacher of artists, and a strenuous worker in strenuous days. Verrocchio lived in that period when the new influences which were to revolutionise Art began to be dimly felt; he stands with one foot firmly planted on the old, and the other timidly touching the new; while, as the teacher of Leonardo da Vinci, he trained one who was destined to lead Art into that land of promise which Verrocchio could only see from afar.

This rugged conception of the Christ Face is taken from "The Baptism of our Saviour," now in the Academy, Florence—the only existing picture of Verrocchio's of which there can be certainty as to its author.

The painting represents Christ standing in a little stream, the waters of which reach only to His ankles, the quaint practice of painting the scene at the junction of two rivers being abandoned, as well as the mediæval practice of gathering the waters up in a heap around Christ although He is standing on the same level as the Baptist. Above the Christ hovers the Dove, emblem of the Holy Spirit sent forth by the Father, whose hands appear through

the opened heavens. John the Baptist—also a rugged and virile figure—is represented as emptying the cup of water upon the head of Christ, while by the side of the gentle stream kneel two angels. Behind is a landscape of the type which Da Vinci constantly introduced. A special interest attaches to this picture, since it is recorded that the angel in the foreground of the picture was painted by Da Vinci himself, and that Verrocchio, when he saw the figure so superior to his own, renounced painting altogether, and gave himself up entirely to sculpture. On the other hand, while the beauty of the one angel is in strong contrast with the somewhat common features of the other, this picture reveals the indebtedness of Da Vinci to his master. The twilight effect and the character of the background reappear, though glorified, in Da Vinci's finest work.

During the period covered by this chapter the plastic arts were making equally rapid strides forward. Ever since the days of Hadrian, sculpture had been on the decline, until like the art of painting it had sunk into a long and dreamless slumber. "The so-called Romanesque and Byzantine styles," as it has been said, "were but the dotage of second childhood, fumbling with the methods and materials of an irrecoverable past."

Sculpture received its first awakening at the hands of Nicolo Pisano, who drew his inspiration

from Nature and from early classic forms, and who divined the secret of that "grand style" which found its final interpreter in the genius of Michael Angelo. This inspiration he handed on to his no less famous son, and soon a succession of sculptors arose who carried on the work of emancipation, and who filled the cathedrals of Italy with the work of their hands. From the works of these "giants before the flood" we have chosen as an illustration the Christ by Donatello, taken from the crucifix above the high altar in the Church of Sant' Antonio, Padua.

Donatello was a boy of sixteen in 1402, when an event took place which exerted a far-reaching influence in the history of Italian Art. Having determined to erect bronze doors for their Baptistery, the Florentines threw open the work for competition. The subject was the sacrifice of Isaac, and, after a preliminary trial, six were selected; this number was again reduced to two, and finally the work was placed in the hands of Ghiberti—a choice the wisdom of which has never been questioned. No less a master than Michael Angelo, looking upon one of them, declared that his rendering was worthy to figure on the gates of Paradise. In these joyous days Donatello grew to manhood, and soon gave proof that another great name was to be added to the long roll of Italy's greatest sons. He does not possess that perfect sense of beauty which makes

Ghiberti's work a joy for ever, but his work is marked by a masculine vigour, a technical accuracy and sincerity of the very highest order. No one can fail to see how wonderfully these qualities are expressed in this beautiful illustration. The cold and unyielding bronze is made to express the awful loneliness of the hour of the cross and the sufferings of the Son of Man. Here is the victim, but here also the sculptor has depicted the strong Son of God. The Face is marred by excruciating pain, but the spiritual majesty of the Sufferer remains; there is no heart-rending appeal to emotionalism, no effort to impress by exaggeration of physical suffering, and yet it is all there—the loneliness, the abandonment, the anguish, and above and within all the victory of that voluntary sacrifice which atones for the sins of the world. This is one of Donatello's noblest achievements; he has breathed into the bronze the breath of life, until it speaks to all the devout worshippers in that silent fane in Padua who lift their eyes to it—speaks of a life lived in perfect obedience to the will of God, and of a death which gives promise of life "to all who believe on His Name."

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DONATELLO. The Crucifixion.

CHAPTER III

Tuscan Types

"Correct the portrait by the living face,
Man's god, by God's God, in the mind of man."—Browning.

"Great nations," says Ruskin, "write their autobiographies in three manuscripts: the book of their deeds, the book of their words, and the book of their art." If the greatness of Italy is to be judged by its Art, then it has no competitor, and in the fifteenth century its autobiography was being written with the most joyous abandon and the most glorious results. To the student this fifteenth century of the Christian era is the most interesting in the whole realm of Art. The eager impulse which, as we have seen, burst forth at the Renaissance, infected every realm of human activity. The monasteries of the East were ransacked for ancient manuscripts; scholars revived the philosophies of ancient Greece and Rome; painters and sculptors sought to emulate the lost beauties of classic art; architects vied with each other in erecting those stately cathedrals and monasteries which are the glory of Italy; while princes rivalled each other in

the luxury of their courts, the splendour of their entertainments, and the liberality with which they rewarded the works of genius.

In this joyous period no class of men entered into more glorious triumphs than those who pursued the calling of the artist. In almost every township of Italy, however small or remote, artists arose, endowed with genius, glowing with the ardour of the times, and eager to conquer every difficulty which confronted them.

From amongst this host of artists we select those who illustrate the progress of religious Art, or who have made some unique contribution to our subject, reserving for succeeding chapters the greatest names of all. This task of selection, however, is more difficult than at first sight it would seem, and the difficulty arises not, strange to say, through the abundance, but through the poverty of material. It is surprising to find that the Face of Christ seldom became a subject of Art amongst the giants of the fifteenth century. "It would seem," says Mrs Jameson, "as if, in the first triumphs over the living face of one of the most powerful and beautiful races of men, they shrank from a head in which something better than the pride of the eye and the power of the brain was demanded." Another reason is found in the extraordinary reverence paid to the Virgin throughout this period, a reverence which, attracting all the light, thrust

into the shadow the features of the Divine Son. Still many types exist, and from these we have sought to select the most beautiful and interesting.

In those high days when the whole of Italy seemed to thrill with the joys of discovery, and the triumphs of genius, one city stood out above all others as the centre of Art, of learning, and of culture. This was Florence. Up to the close almost of the thirteenth century it was a town of mean houses and mean streets, without a single building of which its citizens could boast. This was the Florence of Dante, for the walls of Santa Maria were only appearing above ground when the great poet cast its dust from his feet, and wandered out of its gates an exile, never to return.

As the century was drawing to a close, however, the tide of commercial prosperity began to flow its way; wealth increased, and its citizens, seething with the intellectual life of the times, and stimulated by the example of neighbouring cities, set themselves to beautify their own. One noble building followed another, until on the banks of the Arno there was reared that city of high renown which made Florence then, and makes it now, a joy to all who tread its streets.

Throughout the fourteenth century the influence of Giotto dominated its Art, with Fra Angelico as its saintly representative; then with the dawn of the fifteenth century the full splendour of the Renaissance

burst into flower. Never perhaps at any one period in the world's history, nor in any one place—with the exception of Athens in her golden days—has there been gathered together a greater array of genius than gathered around the court of Lorenzo the Magnificent in Florence. Poetry and painting, literature and sculpture, and every department of art, had its brilliant representative, receiving the patronage, and emulating the enthusiasm of this brilliant head of the house of the Medici.

In this, and in succeeding chapters, a change will be discovered slowly entering into the treatment of the Christ Face. As we have seen the ascetic Christ disappear, and the saintly take its place, so now we begin to see appearing in Art what may be regarded as the beautiful Christ. To represent Him as the fairest amongst men became more and more the aim of the artist, an aim, which, while it tended more and more to exalt the appearance of Christ, ended in emptying Him of those spiritual qualities which appeal, not to the outward eye, but to the hearts and consciences of men. This tendency which at first can only be faintly discerned began to grow with increasing boldness, and ended as we shall see, in the degradation of sacred Art.

From the great galaxy of Florentine artists we choose now two artists who, in their lives, and in their treatment of the Christ Face, represent the artistic ideals and religious movements of their times. The

first is Sandro Botticelli, who reflects the conflicting intellectual and artistic elements struggling for mastery; the second Fra Bartolommeo, who expresses in his art a beautiful devoutness and stainless idealism.

Sandro Botticelli was born in or about the year 1444, and was the son of a Florentine tanner, Pilpepi by name. The custom of giving nick-names —so common in these times—accounts for the title Botticelli—little cask; this name being given to his elder brother, and then handed on to him.

Sandro's father was anxious that his son should pursue the calling of a tanner; but Sandro, according to Vasari, was "eccentric," in that "he would not take any pleasure in reading, writing, or accounts." This is a form of eccentricity which may be admitted as fairly common amongst youths of ten or twelve—the age at which in those days boys began their Art career. Despairing of ever making him an honest tanner, the father handed Sandro over to a competent master in goldsmith work, hoping that he would be attracted by this new craft—then pursued in Italy with extraordinary artistic success. But although the youth showed signs of artistic gifts he had not yet found his "métier," and tiring of the goldsmith's trade he next became enamoured of painting. His docile father, yielding once more to his son's stubborn inclinations, transferred him from the goldsmith's "bottega" to the studio of "that most excellent painter" Fra Filippo Lippi, the not too holy Friar

whose midnight revelries have made him not less famous than his artistic triumphs. Here at last Sandro found his calling. As Vasari quaintly puts it, "he gave himself up entirely to the art he has chosen, and so effectively followed the instructions and imitated the manner of his master, that Fra Filippo became much attached to him, and took such pains with his training that he rapidly attained a degree of proficiency which no one would have predicted of him."

The supreme interest which Botticelli has for the Art student lies in the fact that he represents, as no other artist does, "the double mind of the Renaissance," the "conflicting impulses of Christianity and Hellenism." In those days when he attained such brilliant mastery over the Art of painting, the classic revival, which had set in with the discovery of the treasures of Greek Art, began to flow with irresistible power. The brilliant conversation of the period teemed with classical quotations, poetry and literature were filled with classical allusions, and into the Christian Art of Italy the myths and gods of Hellas began to enter and challenge for place and supremacy.

Along with this classical movement, another contributing element of discord appeared with the entrance into Art of humanism. At first sacred Art was ideal and symbolic, it was engaged in representing the heavenly mysteries, things spiritual and apart, but now with Fra Lippi the human element

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SANDRO BOTTICELLI. Christ crowned with Thorns.

began to enter—human joy and sorrow, the freshness of youth, the tenderness of a mother's love, the gladness of spring, the beauty of the world. Painters were being called away from gazing up into heaven to seek new sources of joy and inspiration amid the common things of earth.

This new tendency, running at first alongside the old, like the sky-blue waters of the Rhone and the earth-brown waters of the Arve, began like them slowly to mix, until at last, as with the waters, the heavenly blue is lost, and the things of earth excel.

Amid all these new and conflicting forces Botticelli stands irresolute. Both the opposing ideas of pagan culture and of Christian sanctity appealed to his allegiance, and he is torn between them. On the one hand a voice calls him to the pursuit of sensuous beauty, to the free and natural expansion of his art, to take on the happy and blithe spirit which, like the butterfly springing from the chrysalis, had just burst upon his age; on the other hand he could not separate himself from the past, from the archaic forms, from the wrestlings of his soul, and the appeal made in the name of Christ to self-denial, to take up the Cross and follow Him.

Torn thus by conflicting emotions, Botticelli represents the double mind of the early Renaissance; since he could not commit himself to either, he did not attain to the joy of either—to the joy or serenity of the Greek spirit, or to the spiritual exaltation of

the Christian. Hence even in his "Venus" there is a haunting sense of loss, and in his Madonnas the "sentiment of ineffable melancholy."

These characteristics, and that abstract idealism which appears in his best work, may be detected in this conception of the Face of Christ. The effort of the artist here, it is necessary to remember, is not to represent the actual Christ as He appeared amongst men, but to represent the idea of suffering patiently borne and of sacrifice divinely rendered. This distinction must constantly be borne in mind in regarding sacred Art—the distinction between a devotional and a historical representation of a subject, in the former of which the artist sets out to express an abstract idea, a doctrine of the Church, or a moral truth, and in the latter to depict an event as it seemed to him to occur. The idea in the mind of the artist here is not to represent any moment or recorded act of Christ when on earth, but to appeal to the beholder through representing Him to us as the Sufferer. Thus we find the marks of suffering upon His Face; as He opens His garment and points to the wound-prints in His side He says, "My body was broken for you"; while, with the upraised hand of blessing, the mercy of the Cross, its inner meaning and substitutionary grace, are signified. In looking upon this conception, therefore, we have not to consider whether the Face is beautiful, since the object of the artist is not to render beauty, but to

ask whether or no the idea in the mind of the artist and the impression he seeks to convey, is conveyed, —a decision which each must reach for himself. It is to be noted, however, that Botticelli's conception of beauty is essentially feminine. That appeal which physical force and masculine vigour make affected him scarcely at all. His figures are slender and languorous; only when movement is introduced it is free from all physical strain, a movement at once gentle and rhythmic. Of the Renaissance artists, no one is more admired to-day, and none have had so subtle an influence on modern æsthetics as Sandro Botticelli.

Fra Bartolommeo was born thirty years after Botticelli, and in that interval great changes had occurred not only in Art, but also in manners. The ancient simplicity of life disappeared as wealth increased; culture took the place of piety, habits of life became more and more luxurious, dress more costly, entertainments more lavish, worldliness more pronounced. Along with this outward refinement there arose a decay of morals; the standard of rectitude began to oscillate; the sanctities of home began to be invaded; language, while becoming more polite, became charged with double meanings, and in the midst of elegant courtesies men looked for concealed impurities. Beneath the outward polish, too, there began to grow with startling rapidity that cruelty which all men possess, and which only the fear of

God imprisons; in the decay of faith, these evil instincts, no longer chained, began to prowl abroad. Men could no longer be trusted; beneath the velvet tunic peeped the dagger, and in the sparkling cup men expected the deadly poison. Murder and incest, lust and cruelty haunted alike the palaces of the great and the hovels of the poor. Italy was full of bravos and cut-throats, who, before they struck down their victims from behind in the quiet street, did not think it incongruous first to visit the Cathedral and, kneeling down, ask God's protection.

Amid this decay of morals, the Church in Italy, instead of lifting up its voice against the prevailing worldliness, was itself hopelessly infected by it. It is safe to say that at no time since the Christian Church was founded had it sunk so low as it did during the closing years of the fifteenth century. Its prelates were worldly princes engaged often in plunder and in vice; they used their solemn functions to enrich themselves, and moved from place to place with a numerous retinue, and amid every mark of outward splendour. The popes, while still exercising the authority of their spiritual position, outshone all others in their display, their rapacity, and their pride. They turned from the exercise of their holy calling to the perpetration of the most horrible crimes, with a lightness of conscience, which in these days it is as impossible to realise, as it is adequately to describe; and the thought that men could receive absolution

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FRA BARTOLOMMEO. Ecce Homo.

for sins at the hands of a Borgia without a shudder, reveals a state of moral degradation which makes the devout heartsick. In Paolo II., Sixtus IV., Innocent VIII., Alexander VI., and Julius II. we have a quintet of names which would not grace any society, and the only good that can be charged to them is, that they encouraged the Arts, and that their love for outward splendour enriched immeasurably the Cathedrals of Italy and the Galleries of Europe.

Meanwhile, since God is not left without His witness in any age, there was being prepared, in the Convent of St Mark's, one who was to shake Florence to its depths, and awaken a widespread spirit of reformation.

Incensed at the luxury of the wealthy Florentines, and the abandonment of the populace to the pursuit of pleasure, Savonarola began those famous sermons in St Mark's which startled Florence, and for a while completely changed its character. Moved by his eloquence, and awed by his warnings, men and women forsook the career of pleasure and sought "religion"; they sought it with the same abandon with which they had pursued their worldly delights, and for three years the government of Florence claimed to be a theocracy. The people received the sacrament daily, they burned in the public square the books and trinkets which reminded them of their past impieties, and in thousands they flocked to the Cathedral day after day to listen to that im

passioned monk who, from his pulpit upon which were inscribed the words, "Jesus Christ is the King of Florence," ruled the city with the rod of righteousness. But the rod was too heavy, and the life too exacting and austere for the fickle and pleasure-loving Florentines. As long as it surprised them with its new emotions they abandoned themselves to its pursuit; but the inevitable reaction set in; restraint proving irksome, gave way first to irritation but faintly hidden, then to opposition openly avowed, and at last and with terrible suddenness to a frenzied revenge which would not be satisfied till that voice, whose lightest requests they once joyfully obeyed, was hushed for ever.

Upon no class did Savonarola's magnetic personality exert a greater influence than upon the artists of Florence. His impassioned eloquence, his dramatic gestures, and power of vivid illustration appealed to the artistic instinct; while his lofty ambitions aroused in many of them a corresponding enthusiasm. Sandro Botticelli, we are told, gave up painting for love of Savonarola, and later would have starved had it not been for the assistance rendered him by Lorenzo de' Medici and other friends. Two of the Robbias were made priests by Savonarola's hand, and testified their veneration for him by coining a medal bearing his portrait on one side. Lorenzo de Credi spent the latter part of his life in the convent of S. Maria Novella. Giovanni della Corniole

perpetuated his likeness in one of the finest modern gems. Michael Angelo, one of the Friar's constant auditors in his youth, pored over his sermons when an old man, and ever retained a vivid impression of his powerful voice and impassioned gestures. Upon none, however, was his influence more profound than upon an artist already known to fame as Baccio della Porta. Baccio sat at the feet of the great Frate and drank in his words. It was part of Savonarola's ambition to make his convent a sanctuary of Art, and to inspire artists with spiritual ideals, so that once more Art would be dominated by the religious motive. This ambition sank into the mind of Baccio, but the fall of his master, and the dire events which ended in his martyrdom, plunged him into hopeless gloom. He resolved to renounce both Art and the world, and entering into the convent of St Mark's he received the name of Fra Bartolommeo.

For six years he remained in utter seclusion, but at the urgent entreaty of his friends he once more resumed his brush, and gave to the world some of its most precious Art treasures.

This illustration which we give of the Face of Christ on the following page is taken from Fra Bartolommeo's masterpiece in the Pitti Palace, Florence. It was ordered by a rich merchant who paid 100 gold ducats for it, and who placed it in the Church of the "Annunciata"; it was executed the year before the Frate's death, when he was at

the zenith of his powers. He died in 1517 at the early age of forty-two.

All the chief characteristics of Fra Bartolommeo's style are exhibited in this picture—his instinct for rhythmic composition, the arrangement of his figures in the form of the pyramid, his warm tones and delicate chiaroscuro, and his beautiful boy angels without which no work of his would be complete. The subject of the painting is allegorical, and represents Christ as the Saviour of the world. Raised upon a pyramid, He holds in one hand a rod with a globe surmounted by a cross, symbolic of His victory over the world, while the other hand is raised to bless. The flowing drapery reveals the wounded side, and the open hand the print of the nail. The Face of the Saviour is gracious and benignant; His eyes are lit by love and follow the act of benediction. The whole conception is full of devotional feeling, and leaves upon the mind of the beholder the joyous impression of hopefulness and victory.

In this last illustration—"Christ bound to the Column"—by Il Sodoma, we are introduced to a different school of painting, and to a more complex type of character in the artist.

In Sienna, more than elsewhere in Italy, religion dominated Art, and so strong was its hold that, long after the religious motive had spent its force in other centres, it remained the predominating feature of Siennese painting. Even in those days when Florence

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FRA BARTOLOMMEO. The Redeemer.

felt the full tide of the Renaissance movement, Sienna still represented the tranquillity of the Middle Ages.

In early days it was amongst the first of the towns of Italy to awake to life, and when Duccio painted the Madonna and Child with some degree of naturalness, his effort was received with great public rejoicing, and his work, like that of Cimabue's in Florence, was carried through the streets with pomp and procession, and placed over the altar in the Cathedral.

This early promise, however, was not maintained, gradually the artistic impulse died out, and not until the end of the fifteenth century did any artist of merit appear to raise it out of the obscurity into which it had sunk.

In this later revival the artist who stands out above all others in the Siennese school is Giovanantonio Bazzi, better known as Il Sodoma. Although no one will care to place him in the foremost rank amongst the most illustrious of the great artists of his day, yet he is one of those who, though long neglected, are now being recognised as men of genius. Nevertheless neither in the domain of character nor of Art is the name of Sodoma one which can be dwelt upon with complete satisfaction. His was one of those lives which give the suggestion of powers but partially fulfilled, and of gifts recklessly squandered. He lived in those days when sensuousness was affecting for evil both literature and Art, and Sodoma reflected in his life

many of the worst excesses of the times. This pursuit of evil pleasures left its mark upon his work. He is one of the most unequal of painters; at his best reaching to great heights, and rendering subtle phases of emotion with great psychological insight, but often slovenly and uninspired, as if he wrought less for love than for reward. As life went on, the unruly elements in his character, as so often happens in life, gained the upper hand, and he died in poverty and neglect.

Il Sodoma at his best is seen in this figure of the Christ, and from a recent biography we extract the following criticism:—

"A highly polished marble column breaks the circle of an arch through which one sees a pale, watery sky, and faintly indicated sea and shore. The figure is nude, save for the mauve drapery about the loins. The head is singularly noble and dignified, and the torso modelled with the delicacy of sentiment which is so marked in his sketches in the Uffizi, the dead Christ on the knees of the Virgin, and the dead Christ in the sepia drawing of the Trinity. . . . Sodoma's Christ is silent, the lips are parted in the intensity of pain, the flesh upon the arm is livid where the tense ropes bind it to the column, and where the thorny crown has pressed into the brow great drops of blood still ooze. Yet it is the intellectual suffering of the figure which strikes and holds one's attention. Far grander than

Page 46. *Alinari.*

Il Sodoma. Christ bound to the Column.

the personal insult, overpowering all sense of momentary pain, there is present a touch of the universal sorrow, of the *Weltschmerz* which the prophet must feel. In this work the painter touched his most ideal creation."

Another conception of the Christ, almost equal in beauty and still more original in treatment, is Sodoma's Christ of the Resurrection morn, in which the risen Redeemer is represented as leaping from the tomb with superabundant life, bearing in his hand a flag, emblem of victory. Around Him the angels seem to be singing that joyful Resurrection Hymn which Goethe in his "Faust" puts into the lips of the Disciples on the dawn of the Easter morn.

"He, who was buried,
Hath burst from the grave!
From death re-assuming
The life that He gave,
Is risen in glory,
Is mighty to save."

CHAPTER IV

North Italian Types

"Thou art fairer than the children of men."

Of the schools of Northern Italy, that of Padua was the earliest, being founded by Squarcione early in the fifteenth century.

Squarcione was a true son of the Renaissance. Filled with an insatiable thirst for knowledge, he wandered through Greece and Italy collecting casts and drawings from the antique, and copying all the most famous examples of ancient sculpture. Though not himself an artist of any great skill, he reached the highest fame as a teacher; his school became the most popular in Italy, and his pupils were proud to add after their own signatures, "pupil of Squarcione."

By far the greatest of his pupils was Andrea Mantegna (1431-1506), an artist of consummate genius, and one whose formative influence was felt throughout the whole of Italy.

Like Giotto, Mantegna was said to have been a shepherd boy, and, showing an early aptitude for drawing, he attracted the attention of Squarcione,

who not only received him as a pupil, but also adopted him as a son. This shows that, if the shepherd boy story is legendary, the young Mantegna must have been left an orphan in early years, or have been brought up under conditions of extreme poverty. Under the care of Squarcione he developed with remarkable swiftness, and when no more than a boy had marked himself out for great achievements. As he was reaching into manhood he had the good fortune of coming into contact with Jacopo Bellini and his sons, an alliance which not only improved his art, but also supplied him with a wife—Jacopo's daughter Nicolosa.

Mantegna's first success was attained when he received the commission to complete the frescoes of the Chapels of St James and St Christopher at Padua. The artist was then only twenty-four, but so successfully did he accomplish the task that his name became established as the greatest master in northern Italy. From this time throughout his long life he wrought with amazing industry, and almost every gallery in Europe is enriched with some work of his hand. The friend of princes and the favoured of the great, Mantegna—like so many other artists of genius—was not left to die without encountering the bitterness of disappointment. Fortune, which through his long life had showered her favours upon him, proved fickle at the last, and deserted him in his old age. The wealth which he had so easily

accumulated slipped through his fingers, foolish speculations drained his resources, his wealthy patrons deserted him, and he died in debt. He has left, however, in the annals of Art a name which nothing can obscure; his works reveal not merely creative genius of a high order, but also a painstaking industry and that patient continuance toward complete mastery which is the crowning glory of the great Renaissance artists.

The illustration which we give is from Mantegna's well-known painting of the Ascension, now in the Uffizi Gallery, Florence. This subject, though it offers great opportunities for dramatic treatment, has not proved attractive to artists, and few have succeeded in rendering it convincingly. Like the Crucifixion, the Entombment, and the Resurrection, the Ascension does not appear in Art until the eighth century. At first artists seized upon the words, "and a cloud received him out of their sight," and so the subject was treated with the disciples gazing up into a cloud in which the Saviour was hidden. In the Ascension of Fra Angelico, for instance, only the feet and the hem of the garments are visible, the cloud having encircled Him. This device, which shows the conscious weakness of early artists, was brushed aside by the great artists of the fifteenth century, who welcomed, rather than shunned, the utmost trial of their skill.

Another expression in the account given of the

Ascension received a literal interpretation at the hands of early artists, namely the words, "He was taken up." This was taken to mean that Christ was actually conveyed up to Heaven by angelic assistance, not that He ascended of His own will. In the early conceptions, therefore, He is represented as surrounded by the mandorla — an almond-shaped aureole — within which He passively rests, while angel wings bear Him upward to His heavenly throne.

In this painting of Mantegna's the conventional treatment of the subject is illustrated, as well as his individuality as an artist. The cloud is here, but is so diminutive that it simply forms a pedestal upon which the Saviour stands; around Him is the mandorla made up of little cherubs—a beautiful thought which suggests the Saviour being borne upward by the wings of little children. He holds in the one hand a banner, the symbol of victory, while the other is raised to bless.

The two outstanding features of Mantegna's art are here illustrated. First his seriousness which finds expression in the Face of Christ. Two alternative methods of treatment naturally present themselves to the artist in dealing with this subject: he must choose either to depict the joy of Christ at the approach of His heavenly rest, in which case the look of Christ would naturally be directed upwards and the prevailing note would be joy; or he might

choose to depict Christ's sorrow at parting from His disciples, in which case His look would be directed earthwards, and the prevailing note would be tender sympathy.

Perhaps the most profound representation of the first is that by Rembrandt in the Gallery at Munich, where Christ clothed in white raiment, His arms outstretched, soars upward, while the heavens open to receive Him, and all around Him is light ineffable. This wonderful picture lifts the thoughts of the beholder away from earth, and centres them upon the glorious victory of Christ, and the rapturous joy of heaven, as the ascended King sits down upon His throne. It is significant that this conception of the Ascension does not appeal to Mantegna, and that he is moved rather by the sense of loss and the sorrow of separation. And this is characteristic of Mantegna as artist. He is attracted by the solemn and the austere, by sorrow rather than by joy. His faces seldom express mirth, and he rarely produced a high type of earthly beauty; he is moved, as all great souls have been, by the tears of things, only here he is too much moved. The face of Christ is over-expressive of sadness, the tragic moment of parting has led the artist to forget the comfortable words of Christ—"It is expedient for you that I go away. . . . I go to prepare a place for you, and if I go and prepare a place for you I will come again, that where I am

Page 52. *Alinari.*

MANTEGNA. Ascension.

there ye may be also." Mantegna in his love for pathetic expression has failed to be true to the evangelical doctrine, and to that hopefulness which, even at the moment of parting, comforted the hearts of the disciples, and cheered the followers of Christ in the darkest days of persecution. Nevertheless the face of Christ is nobly expressive, and is saved from all weakness by its manifest sincerity.

The other characteristic of Mantegna also revealed here is his sculpturesque style. In early days, under Squarcione, Mantegna was trained to admire and to seek after the lost glories of classic Art. His paintings, more than those of any other, show how completely he had learned the lesson. In addition, he became a devoted admirer and imitator of the great sculptor Donatello, and these two influences uniting gave a sculpturesque character to his figures which, in his early works especially, made them appear almost like bas-reliefs. This tendency also is revealed in the innumerable folds of his drapery, which may be detected in the accompanying illustration, and which give the impression of bronze drapery. In all Mantegna's work, however, there is a noble stateliness, a certain hauteur which suggests a proud and lofty character. His influence upon contemporary art was profound; more than any other artist he influenced and determined the direction of Venetian Art, and so deeply did he leave his mark behind him that the last half of the

fifteenth century is often characterised as the "Mantenesque period."

The school of Bologna during the early period is not rich in great names. Only when art had died out in other centres in Italy did it rise into prominence under the Caracci, but in the High Renaissance period it could boast only of one artist of supreme gifts: this was Francesco Raibolini, better known as Francia.

Born in 1450, Francia was in early years apprenticed to a goldsmith and became famous as a worker in metals, his name Francia being that of his master in the goldsmith's trade, which he adopted in gratitude. His career is remarkable in that it was only in middle life, under the influence and tuition of Lorenzo Costa, who opened a studio in the same house, that he turned to painting as a serious pursuit. Quickly he outstripped his teacher, and won a place for himself amongst the great. His paintings have a metallic surface suggestive of the goldsmith, and in their general composition bear remarkable likeness to those of Perugino, though there is no evidence that he ever came in contact with him. Francia, above all other painters of his age, is the painter of the gentle life. His work is full of religious tenderness, touched often with a gentle melancholy; spiritual and refined, he is the St John of the High Renaissance period, dwelling in love, in the pursuit of peace, and in the fear of God.

The illustration which we give is taken from Francia's Pietà in the National Gallery—the Virgin weeping over the dead body of Christ. This is a work to linger over, and quietly to meditate upon, and he who can do so without profound emotion is not to be envied. Beautiful as Art, noble in its reverence, restrained yet profound in its pathos, it confronts us with the deepest mystery of the Christian faith. The Christ has suffered to the last the cruelty of the cross, His enemies have exulted over His agony, the sword has pierced His side, the life blood has been poured out for the cleansing of the world's sin, the agonised spirit has been set free, and gentle death has received it into his abode; now all the long agony is over-past, the pain is wiped away, "He is not dead, but sleepeth." No effort is made to harrow the feelings of the beholder by exaggeration of grief, or by the emaciation of the Sufferer; all is nobly reticent. How peaceful is that sleep upon the Face of Christ! the "marring" has vanished; the strain of the Passion, the anguish of abandonment, the agony of His pure soul when the sins not His own were laid upon Him who was undefiled, have passed away for ever. Here now is victory, and the great soul's rest in the gentle arms of Death. Yet the artist with profound skill suggests a sleep that shall have a blessed awakening. The eyes are not closed for ever; decay cannot claim those features which drew like a magnet the

sinful and soiled children of men, or those lips which spake as never man spake. The suggestion is that of rest after weariness, a rest that shall refresh the spirit, and wipe away the exhaustion, and rekindle the eyes with power and beauty. And this sense of victory, which the sleep of the Saviour suggests, is intensified by the angels which kneel—the one at the head, the other at the feet. On their beautiful and calm faces there is no despair or beclouding grief; the secret hidden from the grief-stricken mother is known to them; they cannot understand her tears—to them all is well. So the artist has made them look out at us with eyes quiet with hope, and a smile hovers upon their lips—a smile faint but assuring, a victory of spiritual genius in the artist, and in the genius of his Art. Only the mother is sad—the sword has pierced her heart. To her mother's eyes this Jesus is not the Messiah, not the mystic King; He is her dear Son whom she nourished through the helpless days of childhood, who was her stay and comfort through her lonely widowhood, and who now is dead—cruelly crucified by wicked men, who hated Him without a cause. So her grief-laden mother's eyes rest upon the lifeless Form, and she weeps—weeps tears bitter and inconsolable. Dark is all around her; no light, no hope dawns in her broken mother's heart. Tenderly she rests His body upon her knees as she did when He was but a little

Page 56. *Rischgitz.*

FRANCIA. Pietà.

child, and never was true Mother of Christ more nobly rendered.

All Francia's best characteristics as artist and devout thinker are here expressed—his tenderness, his power of pathetic expression, his beauty of colouring, and that peculiar stillness which is so remote from us in this hurrying age. To spend an hour before some of his beautiful conceptions is to be taught something which the rush and fury of modern life fails to teach; it is to be lifted away into some cloistered retreat where peace dwells in sanctuary, where quiet thoughts visit the heart, where the fever to get rich seems contemptible, and where purity and peace of heart seem the only good. Out from his canvases the gentle mother looks, so benignant and so sweet that all passions of the heart shrink in her presence, and all that is loving and best bursts into flower. Even Raphael was willing to admit that the Madonnas of Francia were the most devoutly beautiful of all he knew, and all lovers of the saintly in Art treasure his works as pearls of great price.

The remaining illustration, which will be readily recognised as one of the treasures of the National Gallery, was formerly ascribed to Leonardo da Vinci, but is now recognised as being the work of Bernardino Luini. It is curious that of so great an artist so little should be known, both the date of his birth and death being matters of doubt. The place of his

birth was Luino, on Lake Maggiore, one of the most beautiful parts of northern Italy, "where hills and streams and air meet in softest harmonies," and the year 1475 is generally accepted as the year of his birth.

Luini belongs to the School of Lombardy, which had its centre in Milan. To this city of old renown, lying in the heart of the Lombardy plains, Leonardo da Vinci was drawn, and gathered around him there a number of artists whom he inspired, and upon whom he left the imprints of his splendid genius. Of these the greatest was Bernardino Luini, "who stands alone in uniting consummate art-power with untainted simplicity of religious imagination."

Luini, so long forgotten in the annals of art, has been discovered to us largely through the efforts of Ruskin, and nothing in the language of praise is too excessive for the great art critic when he touches on his favourite master. Thus he describes him :—

"Child of the Alps and of their divinest lake, he is taught without doubt or dismay a lofty religious creed, and a sufficient law of life and of its mechanical arts.

"Whether lessoned by Leonardo himself, or merely one of many disciplined in the system of the Milanese schools, he learns unerringly to draw, unerringly and enduringly to paint.

"His tasks are set him without question day by day by men who are justly satisfied with his work, and who accept it without any harmful praise or senseless blame. Place, scale, and subject are

determined for him on the cloistered cell or the Church dome, as he is required, and for sufficient daily bread, and little more he paints than what he has been taught to design wisely, and has passion to realise gloriously. Every touch he lays is eternal, every thought he conceives is beautiful and pure; his hand moves always in radiance of blessing; from day to day his life enlarges in power and peace, it passes away cloudlessly, the starry twilight remaining arched far against the night."

There will be few Art critics found, we imagine, willing to endorse Ruskin's verdict, that Luini occupies a far higher place in art than Leonardo himself, but none who will deny to him a very high place as artist, and as an interpreter of the religious sentiment.

Considerable difference of opinion has existed as to the title this picture, which we give by way of illustration, ought to bear. It has been described as "Christ disputing with the Doctors," and also "Christ in Argument with the Pharisees." On the one hand it has been urged that since the Christ is not a child but a young man it cannot be regarded as a rendering of the "Disputation," on the other that the Christ represented here is too young for it to be regarded as belonging to that stage of His earthly ministry in which His conflict with the Pharisees is recorded. The point cannot be settled, but the painting receives now the latter title, and the character of the composition seems to support this decision.

The Face of the youthful Christ in this painting of Luini's is full of that soft beauty and tender sentiment which are so characteristic of his style. We see here the influence of Da Vinci, though Luini was very far from being a slavish copyist, and his faces have a marked individuality. The eyes are usually long and narrow, the mouth large with lips full, with a faint smile hovering upon them; the hands are long and delicate and beautifully drawn, the colour rich and harmonious. Luini has not attempted to paint the Christ in bitter conflict with the Pharisees when He poured out upon them the vials of His wrath: Michael Angelo alone could have done justice to such a subject; he rather represents Him as gently persuading, emphasising His gracious words by checking off the sentences on the fingers of His beautiful hands.

The figures behind represent the various attitudes of agreement or dissent. The disputant on the right who holds the Book of the Law in his hands will not be persuaded; his firm-set mouth and hard features represent the dogmatist; behind him is the cruel face of the fanatic, too contemptuous to listen or dispute; on the other side Luini represents the earnest seeker after truth, almost persuaded, yet with one remaining difficulty; while behind him is seen the gentle aged face of the dreamer and thinker whose mind is wandering away in distant realms of thought. The whole conception is spiritual and refined, beautiful in sentiment, in execution, and in colour.

Page 60. LUINI. Christ and the Pharisees. *Rischgitz.*

CHAPTER V

Venetian Types

"If I drew higher things with the same truth,
That were to take the Prior's pulpit place,
Interpret God to all of you."—Browning.

In the illustrations already given the gradual changes which have been taking place in Art will have become apparent. As long as the Byzantine influence remained, the same features of the Christ Face were reproduced with monotonous regularity. With the break away from tradition which occurred at the Renaissance this conventional treatment was relaxed, and artists, while retaining many of the characteristics of the Byzantine type, such as the long hair parted in the middle and the forked beard, began to introduce into the Face of Christ character and expression. Christ had then to be made known, not by a conventional likeness, but by an added dignity and impressiveness over the other figures by whom He was surrounded. Here the real difficulties of Art began, and the attempt to produce a worthy conception tested alike the capacity of the artist and his character as man.

As long as a deep religious motive animated Art, this effort was reverently made, if not successfully

accomplished; but gradually, as artists triumphed over technical difficulties and exulted in their new-found joy of expression, the reverent and spiritual treatment of the subject weakened before the æsthetic. Artists began to take an increasing delight in the beautiful, in outward magnificence, and in those splendours of the world which gave them opportunity to display their love of colour, and of richly adorned and lordly humanity. In this increasing secularism Christ became less and less a subject of devout and holy awe, and more and more a splendid Figure upon which artists might exercise their colour and their craft.

When we come to Venetian Art we find this tendency,—which had already become apparent in the illustrations given,—frankly and openly pursued. "To idealise the sensualities of the external universe, to achieve for colour what the Florentines had done for form, to invest the worldly grandeur of human life at one of its most gorgeous epochs with the dignity of the highest Art"—this was the task Venetian artists were given to achieve.

In the achievement of this high task the artists of Venice were aided firstly by their physical environment, and secondly by the political and social conditions under which they lived.

With regard to the first, Venice, "with her pavement of liquid chrysoprase, with her palaces of porphyry and marble, her frescoed façades, her quays

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GIOVANNI BELLINI. Head of Christ.

(*By permission of the Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge.*)

and squares aglow with the costumes of the Levant, her lagoons afloat with the galleys of all nations, her churches floored with mosaics, her silvery domes and ceilings glittering with sculpture bathed in gold—Venice, luxurious in the light and colour of a vaporous atmosphere, where sea-mists rose into the mounded summer clouds—arched over by the broad expanse of sky, bounded only by the horizon of waves and plain and distant mountain ranges, and reflected in all its many hues of sunrise and sunset upon the glassy surface of smooth waters—Venice, asleep like a miracle of opal or of pearl upon the bosom of an undulating lake: here, and here only on the face of the whole globe was the unique city wherein the pride of life might combine with the lustre of the physical universe to create and stimulate in the artist a sense of all that was most sumptuous in the pageant of the world of sense."[1]

With regard to the social and political conditions under which the Venetians pursued their calling, it is necessary to remember that the art of Venice was later by more than a century than that of Florence. It did not begin in lowly days when the city was poor and unadorned, and gradually rise with it into power and splendour; when Venetian art began to appear the city had already attained to great commercial importance and magnificence. "Among Italian cities," says Ruskin, "Venice alone was tranquil in

[1] Symonds' "Renaissance," Vol. III.

her empire, independent of Church interference, undisturbed by the cross purposes and intrigues of the despots, inhabited by merchants who were princes, and by a free-born people who had never seen war at their gates. The serenity of undisturbed security, the luxury of wealth amassed abroad and liberally spent at home, gave a physiognomy of ease and proud self-confidence to all her edifices."

The combined effect of these conditions upon religious Art can readily be imagined. In Venetian art the ascetic Christ entirely disappears: the lowly Nazarene-Friend of the poor and the outcast, who had not where on earth to lay His head, whose robes were stained by the dust of travel and worn by the vigils of the mountain and the midnight—this lowly Christ was all unknown to these lords of colour and worshippers of magnificence. They clothed Him instead in knightliest apparel, and made Him all glorious without; and while they enriched Him in all things earthly so that men might recognise Him by the richness of His dress, they denied Him those humble and heavenly things which did distinguish Him, and through which alone He makes His divine appeal to human hearts. It was not that Venetian artists were irreligious, as much as that, introducing into their religion a worship of the things that are seen and temporal, the things that are unseen and eternal were at first avoided, and at last forgotten. The end, therefore, was the decay of the devout spirit.

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GIOVANNI BELLINI. The Transfiguration.

Turning now to the illustrations which we have selected, the first will be recognised as the characteristic type of Face painted by Giovanni Bellini. Born in 1428, the most illustrious son of an illustrious family, Giovanni was, as it has been said, a school of painting in himself rather than a single painter. His early works were executed in tempera, but oil-painting having been introduced into Venice, Bellini was amongst the first to adopt it, and the first to carry it to perfection. His works are of intense interest to the student as illustrating that transition from the quattrocento modes of thought and feeling in which archaic treatment and mediæval sentiment still linger, to the full flowering splendour and freedom of the high Renaissance; but they are also interesting to all lovers of art for their intrinsic merit and beauty.

The illustration which we give is taken from his famous painting of the Transfiguration, now in the National Museum of Naples. The subject itself has not been found a favourite one amongst artists. It is too ideal, too remote from human experience, and the attempt to realise the transcendent manifestation of heavenly glory in the earthly career of Christ puts a strain on the highest art. In the early Byzantine period it was hardly ever attempted; Fra Angelico, as we have seen, treated the subject in a purely formal manner, and Raphael, as we shall see, embodied it in his noblest and last effort. Modern artists have left the subject severely alone; it seems

to make no appeal to the modern mind. Bellini treats it with characteristic reverence and purity of feeling. The central figure is that of Christ, who is just rising from the earth; His Face is full of that grave dignity which characterises Bellini's work, His long hair falls in ripples upon His shoulders; He is clothed in white raiment, every fold of which is beautifully rendered, while the whole figure is commanding. The conception of the Christ here belongs more to the type of Francia and Perugino than to the later Venetian; it is mild and compassionate, and the hands are raised in gentle benediction. Upon the Face, lighting it up, and shining upon the white raiment, falls the morning glow; the halo is absent, but the morning clouds make an aureole, and against them the Christ Face stands out in beautiful relief. On either side of Christ stand Moses and Elias, while in front are the cowering figures of the affrighted disciples. Behind the figures of Christ and the disciples Bellini has painted one of those beautiful landscapes which he so often introduces, and in which he outdistanced all his contemporaries, every detail of which is lovingly executed. It is a pastoral scene; the stream runs gently along through green fields where cattle are grazing; in the distance are gently undulating hills, thrown up against the light of the awakening day. On the road two people are seen quietly conversing, while coming from a castle on the hill a herdsman is seen driving

his oxen to their pasturage. Bellini adopts here in Art, what literary artists frequently adopt in literature to heighten the effect of their description—the contrast of extremes. Carlyle in his French Revolution, in the midst of his description of the horrors of the storming of the Bastille, when the passions of men were roused to white heat, and the air was rent with their shouts, suddenly takes the reader away to the distant fields of France, where, in the gloaming, an old woman is peacefully gathering her sticks for the evening meal, all unconscious of the terrible events which are happening in the capital. So Bellini contrasts the terror of the disciples with the peaceful unconcern of the herdsmen, and the trivial village gossip of the two men on the roadway with Christ's conversation with Moses and Elias on the subject of His decease, which He should accomplish at Jerusalem. Perhaps, too, the artist meant to assume the rôle of the preacher, and to suggest to us the sad unconcern of men toward spiritual things, so that even while Christ is transfigured beside them their eyes are holden that they cannot see, and their attention absorbed by the trivial affairs of life.

Bellini was the first of the great Venetian colourists; his paintings seem often suffused with a luminous golden light, marvellously warm and glowing. Like so many of the great artists of the high Renaissance period his greatest achievements surround the life of the Madonna, and Bellini's Madonnas! who has not

spent rich moments of delight before them, with their strange and pathetic wistfulness, so touching yet so elusive, as they lift the "column of their throats," and hold up for the love of all human hearts the beautiful and mysterious Child! Bellini died in a ripe old age, honoured of men, and handed on to the great artists who were to follow the achievements he had won.

The beautiful Face of Christ which follows that of Bellini is from the matchless brush of Giorgione, pupil of Giovanni Bellini, master of Titian, prince of colourists, king in his own right in the glorious days of Venetian Art. "Born half way between the mountains and the sea—that young George of Castelfranco—of the Brave Castle: stout George they called him, George of Georges, so goodly a boy he was, Giorgione.

"Have you ever thought what a world his eyes opened upon—fair, searching eyes of youth? What a world of mighty life, from those mountain roots to the shore; of loveliest life, when he went down, yet so young, to the marble city—and became himself as a fiery heart in it?"

Into that fiery heart, as Ruskin calls it, all the gold and azure of sky and sea, of sunrise and sunset, seem to have sunk; and his pictures glow with such intensity that they seem as if lighted from within. In this great artist, who died so young, who was so richly dowered, the Renaissance finds its ripest fulfilment. He lives to-day more an

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GIORGIONE. Christ bearing His Cross.

influence upon others than as an artist, for many of his works have perished, and of his frescoes not one remains; but it was he who cut the last link which bound painting to the old mediæval forms, and set it free to enter into perfect freedom.

Turning now to the illustration, it may be admitted that of all the cross-bearing Christs of Art—and how many there are of them!—there is none so intellectual or so contemplative as this. Doubts have been throw upon its genuineness, but it is now generally accepted as a Giorgione, and bears all the marks of his style. The picture is thus described by Messrs Crowe and Cavalcaselle in their "History of Painting in Northern Italy": "Christ, majestically prominent in concentrated light and proportion, carries His cross, and turns toward the spectator with matchless serenity of glance and expression in His countenance. In the gloom behind, a guard appears following the procession. In front a half-naked executioner, encouraged by an old man at his side, threatens the Saviour, and holds the rope. Two peculiarities characterise the piece, the charm of high art and the gift of miracles. . . . We discern Giorgione's type and subtle naturalism, his grand balance of chiaroscuro and illuminating power, his spare impast, his nice selection of tints, his broken tones and blended transitions."

The Face as it looks out from the printed page upon us has certain striking characteristics which cannot fail to arrest our attention. It is a Face of

singular and delicate beauty: the forehead is broad and full of intellectual power, the features are delicate and refined, the eyes full of expression. But the most striking feature of the conception is the utter absence of any sign of suffering. Take away the cross and the Face looks out from the page with a gentle and benignant expression; the eyes are not concerned with personal suffering, they are concerned with something in the beholder; it is as if Christ walking along sees some one in the crowd whose character awakens Him to meditation. The crown of thorns encircles His head, but it does not seem to pierce His brow or cause physical anguish, it seems rather to rest gently as an adornment; nor does the cross seem to oppress by its weight, or the terrible use to which it is to be put disturb the equanimity of His bearing. This is all the more significant since Art, seeking to deepen the sympathy of the beholder, not only made the Christ Face full of physical anguish, but reaching beyond the account given by the Evangelists, made our Lord sink beneath the load. This degrading conception, to which Raphael lent the weight of his great influence, ran into increasing extravagance of treatment, until in the decadent period our Lord was often represented as prostrate upon the ground with an immense cross, which no single man could carry, pressing Him down. In such representations the injunction to bear

the cross finds little support from the attitude of the Cross-Bearer Himself.

It is the opposite and nobler conception that Giorgione depicts—the Christ bearing His cross with kingly grace, finding it light because it is borne for love's sake, and in mercy for all the sinful children of men.

Another suggestive feature in this beautiful conception is the absence of the blue mantle and red under-robe which are in art, with rare exceptions, the coloured garments with which Christ is represented as wearing on the day of the cross. Giorgione instead robes the Saviour in white—the garb of purity and innocence.

In the richness of colour, in the instinctive feeling after beauty which refuses even to depict anguish, and in the healthy rejection of everything that tends to the morbid or sickly, we have the true type of Venetian art in its most vigorous period.

The conception of the Christ Face by Titian, the greatest master of the Venetian school, is given in a separate chapter along with the other immortals; our remaining illustration is by Paolo Veronese, and represents the opulent and mundane spirit in art carried to its utmost excesses. Veronese was born in 1528, when the fruit of the Renaissance was becoming over ripe, and when in Venice the display of outward magnificence had become a passion. Of this magnificence in art Veronese is the high priest. His canvases are usually immense,

and are filled with crowds of people arrayed in all the splendour which his imagination can conceive or colour depict; in the backgrounds are marble colonnades of pompous architecture with clear sky and silvery clouds beyond. Shining armour, gleaming silks and satins, waving banners with intricate device, crowns and sceptres, and all things that gleam and glitter in the sun, form the furniture of his pictures.

His treatment of religious subjects has no conceivable relation to truth; the Evangelists are politely ignored; Veronese composes a new gospel more to his taste, and more to the taste of the sensuous and pleasure-loving times in which he lived. The lowly occupants of the fisherman's boat, and even the sinners who haunt the Saviour's steps, are politely elevated in society, and are clad in the most gorgeous robes, and they would utterly fail to recognise themselves as occupants of marble palaces, or seated, as Veronese seats them, at loaded tables, enjoying repasts which might awake the envy of a prince. His Christs and Maries and martyrs of all sorts, as it has been said, are composed, serious, courtly, well-fed personages, who, like people of the world accidentally overtaken by some tragic misfortune, do not stoop to distortions, or express more than a grave surprise, or a decorous sense of pain. The realm in which Veronese moves is that in which the lust of the eye and the pride of life hold undisputed sway, and in his art all the pomp of the world and the things which perish with it find a place.

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VERONESE. Marriage Feast at Cana.

Alinari.

The illustration which we have taken is from Veronese's great painting entitled "Marriage at Cana," now in the Louvre. This immense picture covers a space of six hundred square feet, and contains one hundred and thirty life-size figures. It is a superb wedding-feast to which have been invited the greatest personages of the time. Amongst those who grace the gathering by their presence are Francis I., Mary of England, Eleanor of Austria, Charles V., and many of the most distinguished of Venice; their garments outshine in magnificence any marriage feast in history, and they meet in a marble colonnade of matchless splendour.

As a work of Art it is a *tour de force;* as an interpretation of the miracle at Cana it is a worldly caricature; yet Veronese did not mean it as such—to him it was a subject offering splendid opportunity for the display of his powers. Art and the spiritual life were now journeying by different paths.

The Christ Face is what we should expect under such circumstances. It is refined and intellectual, and Veronese repeats the same type from time to time in his paintings; but Art has wandered far since the saintly Fra Angelico painted the Face of the gentle Christ in the cloistered retreat of St Mark's. It has gained in dexterity, in accuracy, in technical power and excellence, but the wanderer who seeks for the satisfying Face of Christ amongst the gorgeous canvases of Venice, seeks in vain.

CHAPTER VI

The Golden Age

"'Tis the weakness in strength that I cry for: my flesh that I seek.
In the Godhead! I seek and I find it! Oh! Saul it shall be,
A Face like my face that receives thee; a man like to me,
Thou shalt love, and be loved by for ever; a Hand like this hand,
Shall throw open the gate of life anew to thee! see the Christ stand!"
—Browning.

The period to which the illustrations in this and the succeeding chapter belong, may be termed the golden age of Italian Art. In this period artists sought no longer to be mere religious teachers, nor were they any longer willing to sacrifice technique to express religious sentiment; their ambition now was the perfection of art. They sought freedom to express their highest conceptions of natural beauty, and to give these conceptions their most fitting and perfect form. To this period belong the greatest names in Italian Art, and the greatest pictures in the whole realm of painting.

Three names stand out as belonging to this greatest of Art periods, each supreme in genius, yet each differing widely in character and in gifts. These three are Leonardo da Vinci, Michael Angelo,

and Raphael. Of these it has been said that Leonardo was the greatest genius, Michael Angelo the noblest spirit, Raphael the happiest man. These several characteristics are illustrated in the conceptions of the Face of Christ which follow.

Of the few pictures which bear the name of Da Vinci, and which are known to be genuine, by far the greatest and the most widely known is his picture of the Last Supper. In this wonderful work the artist brought to bear all his inventive power, his mastery of technique, and his profound study of the human form and face. In it the ideal and the real were blended together in perfect unity, and the grandest and most difficult problem in Art solved.

The original picture, painted on an end wall of a Dominican convent in Milan, is now, alas! almost obliterated. It has suffered through the artist mixing his colours with inferior oil, through the ravages of time, but most of all through the contempt of men. Of the many acts of vandalism which have been perpetrated in the realm of art, none stands out so gross as that through which this immortal work has suffered. The Dominican monks, living in the daily presence of it, regarded it with such indifference that they actually allowed a door to be cut through the centre of it, in order evidently that their food might reach the table with the least delay. It only remained for Napoleon's soldiers to turn the refectory into a stable, and to amuse themselves by pelting

the heads of the Apostles with brickbats, to reach the lowest depths of degradation.

No incident in the Saviour's life has proved more enticing to artists than that of the Last Supper, and, it may be added, none has wrecked so many reputations. The incident, so full of pathos, makes the most exhaustive demand upon the artist's creative powers, and it is fitting that this subject should have inspired what is generally regarded as the greatest picture in the world. So dominating has been Da Vinci's conception, that most of the artists who have, since his day, treated the subject, have drawn their inspiration from him.

It is related by Vasari that Da Vinci, during the execution of the work, was boarded and lodged at the expense of the convent, and that he was wont to spend hours before it, absorbed in study. This inactivity was not altogether appreciated by the worthy prior, who seemed to see in it only a device for wasting time, and the convent's substance. Da Vinci grimly assured him, however, that when he appeared the most idle he was in reality the most busily engaged; and with this paradox the prior was forced to be content.

The picture offers a profound psychological study in human emotions. Christ has just spoken the ominous words: "One of you shall betray Me," and the agitation which sweeps over the company of disciples gives opportunity for the most varied

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LEONARDO DA VINCI. Head of Christ.

expression and the most dramatic movement. This agitation is in startling contrast with the calm of the central Figure, and all the movement in the varied scene is dominated by His Presence. His head is bowed, His eyes are downcast; yet the whole attitude, expressive of patient grief, of divine resignation, subjects all other emotion in the picture to itself, and profoundly moves the beholder. The triumph of genius is reached by making the active and dramatic emotion of the disciples subordinate to the quiet and patient grief of the Christ.

Leonardo's study of the Face of Christ, over which he was said to have pondered for half a lifetime, would have been quite lost to us were it not that a finished study of it happily exists, and is preserved in the Academy of Fine Arts in Milan. It is this study which is here given in illustration. Of all the conceptions of the Face of Christ imagined by man and painted on canvas, this is by common consent regarded as the most beautiful. It is Christ at one of the saddest moments of His life; His eyes half closed, His Face so calm and yet so grief-laden, speak of a sorrow which none can share. Amid the eager questionings He is silent. The betrayer is there, but Christ will not betray him. Afterwards, when the first rush of excitement is over, He is to dismiss him, solemnly, quietly, finally. Even now the shadows are rushing around him whom evil has won to its ministry, and claimed as its own. In a

few moments it will be night, and the darkness will wrap itself around him, and hurry him to his cursed mission and his doom. Then the Face of the Christ will change, the eyes open, the features strengthen, the frame brace itself with bands of steel, as He says, arising from the table: "Arise, let us go hence." But here it is the Christ of the wounded heart we see; for one whom He has come to seek and to save is lost, and cannot be found.

As an interpretation of this divine emotion this study is sublime and unapproached. Its beauty haunts the imagination, its pathos moves the heart.

The transition to the next illustration will produce a reaction, painful to some it may be, certainly violent to all. This is the Christ of the Last Judgment, who, from the roof of the Sistine Chapel in Rome, looks down with threatening eye, and upraised hand, upon the awed worshippers below. In this illustration we pass from the more effeminate types to the opposite extreme of masculine strength. Michael Angelo's conception of the Christ, massive and wrathful, is a revelation of his own perturbed yet titanic genius. All he did, as all he was, is on the scale of the tremendous. Agitated in heart, wounded in spirit, his labours were those of Hercules: he could not rest, and he would not die. To his sombre genius the conception of Christ as the Gentle Shepherd had few attractions. It was into this conception of Christ as Judge that he poured

all the passion of his stormy soul, and that he sought to recover all the lost splendours of classic art. His picture of the "Last Judgment," from which this illustration is taken, is the most famous of his works. It engrossed his whole time and strength for eight years, and was unveiled on Christmas Day 1541, "for the amazement of Rome and of the world." It remains an "amazement" until this day, and the subject of never-ending controversy. Here are two widely differing impressions. The first is by the late Dean Farrar. "This nude, wrathful giant," he says, "looks down upon the damned, whom He is hurling into darkness as a crushed, agonised, demon-tortured rainstorm of humanity, with inexorable rejection. His muscular right arm is uplifted as though at once to drive away and smite. He is just rising from his seat, and in the next moment will remain terrifically upright. The Virgin shrinks terrified under the protection of His arm."

The next impression is that of the late Sir Wyke Bayliss, late President of the Royal Society of British Artists. Referring to this criticism of Dean Farrar's, he says: "Is there a cryptogram underlying all great Art, that different men read such different meanings in the same line, the same brush-mark, the same presentiment of vision? To me it seems that the Mother, so far from shrinking from Him in terror, turns to find shelter in His wounded side. She remains a woman still, but her Son is a God."

Whether we incline to regard the Figure of Christ as that of a "wrathful Giant," or a "God," there can be no doubt that it is a mighty conception. The Face has nothing of the spirituality of Angelico, or the haunting loveliness of Da Vinci, but it is the conception of a Titan who could call the thunder and lightning to his aid, and who could steep his brush in all the anguish and agony of his own tempestuous soul. For to Angelo the times were out of joint. Incensed and outraged, he bade defiance to the world, to its low follies and its crimes. The Christ the world needed was to him a moral Hercules who would sweep into the gulf the society abandoned to its lusts and secret crimes, and build out of the ruins a kingdom of righteousness. At the very time he was painting this picture he wrote to Vittoria Colonna, the one person in the world whom he admitted to share his inmost thoughts: "I am going in search of truth with uncertain step. My heart, always wavering between vice and virtue, suffers and faints, like a weary traveller wandering in the dark."

Even to the end his great and troubled heart groped amidst uncertainties.

"Now my fair bark through life's tempestuous flood
Is steered, and full in view that port is seen,
Where all must answer what their course has been,
And every work be tried, if bad or good;
Now do those lofty dreams, my fancy's brood,
Which made of Art an idol and a queen,
Melt into air: and now I feel, how keen,
That what I needed most I most withstood.

Alinari.

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MICHAEL ANGELO. Christ as Judge.

"Ye fabled joys, ye tales of empty love,
What are ye now, if twofold death be nigh?
The first is certain, and the last I dread.
Ah! what does Sculpture, what does Painting prove
When we have seen the cross, and fixed our eye
On Him whose arms of love were thus outspread?"

(Mr Glassford's Translation.)

In that ignoble age there were few lives lived more agitated, or more upright, than that of the great Michael Angelo.

To mention the name of Raphael is to pass immediately from "Paradise Lost" to "Paradise Regained." The terrors of the "Dies Iræ" and the wrathful Judge no longer overwhelm us, for in the sunny soul of Raphael there was no "agitation," and his delight was to paint gentle-faced Madonnas, and sweet Infants, and to set them in an Umbrian landscape of such heavenly peacefulness as to make us dream of the Paradise of God. "In studying the life and work of Raphael we must always remember the man himself," says Hoyt, "his high moral and intellectual character. He seems to have been from childhood a seeker of that which is highest. All the individual traits of intellectual and moral life were admirably balanced in him. Although he may well be called the "Apostle of Beauty," the beauty he portrays seldom approached the sensuous; it is noble, intellectual, moral, spiritual beauty, which must have had its counterpart in the

soul of the artist. From each of the great masters whose works he studied, he assimilated that which was highest and best, and thus formed a style peculiar to himself. Whether in grand decorative compositions, in lofty ideal conceptions, in the treatment of religious subjects, or in the highest type of portraiture, he is always the great master, ever struggling to attain his high ideal, the perfection of beauty and truth. No other artist has ever approached him in the number of noble pictures painted in so few years of time."

This illustration of the Face of Christ which we give is taken from his "Transfiguration," the work upon which he was engaged at his death, and which, though he left it uncompleted, is regarded as one of his greatest works, by some even as the greatest art treasure in the world. It is sad to think that Raphael died before its completion at the early age of thirty-seven. It was ordered by Cardinal Giuliano de' Medici for a church in the provincial cathedral of Narbonne, who also gave a commission to Sebastiano del Pombo to paint for the same church a "Raising of Lazarus," a picture which is now in the National Gallery. This provoked a keen rivalry, which was stimulated by Michael Angelo, who, the story goes, went the length of helping Del Pombo by making special drawings of the subject for him. Spurred on by this to do his utmost, Raphael over-taxed his strength and caught

cold when in a weak state, from which a fever ensued. His friends thought little of it, but Raphael knew that his end was near, and sending for his pupil Giulio Romano, he gave instructions regarding the completion of his picture. He died on the night of Good Friday, after an illness of only a fortnight's duration.

His picture was placed over his bier as he lay dead, and when his pupils and friends and all the people of Rome flocked to look upon his face for the last time, they lifted up their eyes from his lifeless body to his glorious work, and every heart was like to "burst with grief."

"And when all beheld
Him where he lay, how changed from yesterday—
Him in that hour cut off, and at his head
His last great work; when, entering in, they look'd,
Now on the dead, then on that masterpiece—
Now on his face, lifeless and colourless,
Then on those forms divine that lived and breathed,
And would live on for ages—all were moved,
And sighs burst forth, and loudest lamentations."

Again, as his body was borne to its last resting-place, his unfinished "Transfiguration" was carried before it, and all Rome lined the streets, "grieving that they should see his face no more."

Fortunately the upper part of the picture, which represents the transfigured Christ, had been completed; but the lower part was yet incomplete, and it was finished by the not too skilful hand of Romano.

At first it was placed in the Church of S. Pietro in Montorio, whence it was carried to Paris by the French in 1797, who at that time were exhibiting their artistic and other instincts by successfully pillaging the art galleries of Europe. It was restored, however, to Italy in 1815, and is now in the Vatican.

The most sympathetic description of the picture has been given by Mrs Jameson, from whose "History of our Lord" we take the following quotation:—

"In looking at the Transfiguration we must bear in mind that it is not a historical but a devotional picture—that the intention of the painter was not to represent a scene, but to excite religious feelings by expressing, so far as painting might do it, a very sublime idea.

"If we remove to a certain distance from the picture so that the forms shall become vague, indistinct, and only the masses of colour and the light and shade perfectly distinguishable, we shall see that the picture is indeed divided as if horizontally, the upper half being all light, and the lower half, comparatively, all dark. As we approach nearer, step by step, we behold above the radiant Figure of the Saviour floating in mid air, with arms outspread, garments of transparent light, glorified visage upturned as if in rapture, and the hair lifted and scattered as I have seen it in persons under the influence of electricity. On the right, Moses, on the left, Elijah, representing respectively the old Law and

Page 84. *Alinari.*

RAPHAEL. Transfiguration.

the old Prophecies, which both testified of Him. The three disciples lie on the ground, terror-struck, dazzled. There is a sort of eminence, or platform, but no perspective, no attempt at real locality, for the scene is revealed as a vision, and the same soft, transparent light envelopes the whole. This is the spiritual life, raised far above the earth, but not yet in heaven. Below is seen the earthly life, poor humanity struggling helplessly with pain, infirmity, and death. The father brings his son, the possessed, or, as we should now say, the epileptic boy, who ofttimes falls into the water, or into the fire, or lies grovelling on the earth, foaming and gnashing his teeth; the boy struggles in his arms—the rolling eyes, the distorted features, the spasmodic limbs are at once terrible and pitiful to look at. Such is the profound, the heart-moving significance of this wonderful picture. It is, in truth, a fearful approximation of the most opposite things. The mournful helplessness, suffering, and degradation of human nature are placed in immediate contrast with spiritual life, light, hope—nay, the very fruition of heavenly rapture."

High, soaring above all else, is the form of the glorified Lord. It is the wonderful power and beauty of the Face and Figure of Christ which gives this work its overwhelming attraction. While Angelico has painted the Heavenly Friend, and Da Vinci the Patient Sufferer, and Angelo the Wrathful

Judge, Raphael has portrayed the risen and glorified Redeemer. Out of a cloud of dazzling whiteness He appears, radiant and commanding, and as one looks, one seems to hear the crash of Handel's mighty chorus: "The kingdom of this world is become the kingdom of our Lord, and of His Christ, and He shall reign for ever and ever, KING OF KINGS, AND LORD OF LORDS."

CHAPTER VII

The Golden Age—*Continued*

"From harmony, from heavenly harmony
The universal frame began,
The diapason ending full in man."—Dryden.

Along with the three immortals whose contributions to our subject we have illustrated, there are another three who dwell in Olympus, hardly less illustrious, each of whom painted beautiful types of the Face of Christ. These three are Andrea del Sarto, Titian, and Correggio.

Andrea del Sarto was born in Florence, and was so admired by the Florentines that they called him "Andrea senza errore,"—"the faultless painter." The "faultless painter," however, was not the faultless man, and the Art of Del Sarto is an illustration of the axiom of St Paul that the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit. It was Andrea's lot to fall in love with a beautiful woman of unworthy character, and to love her with a passion unchecked by honour, a passion which humiliated him in his own eyes, and stained his reputation amongst men. "His life was corroded

by the poisonous solvent of love," as Swinburne puts it, "and his soul burned into dead ashes." Being entrusted by the King of France with a large sum of money to purchase for him certain works of Art, Andrea diverted the money to his own use.

> "I took his coin, was tempted, and complied,
> And built this house and sinned—and all is said."

Readers of Browning will recall his poem entitled "Andrea del Sarto," and the subtle way in which he analyses his character, and compares the faulty life with the flawless Art. Andrea and his wife sit one evening looking out toward Fiesole, and as he talks she smiles. Instantly the artist is alive, he conceives a subject, its composition, its atmosphere, its prevailing colour :—

> "You smile? why, there's my picture ready made,
> There's what we painters call our harmony!
> A common greyness silvers everything. . . .
> Eh? the whole seems to fall into shape,
> As if I saw alike my work and self,
> And all that I was born to be and do,
> A twilight piece."

Then Andrea begins to analyse his own art. He can do with consummate ease what many only dream of all their lives. His hand follows with unerring skill the creations of his heart; whatever he wishes to do he can do easily, perfectly; he needs no sketches first, no studies; there, with a sweep of

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ANDREA DEL SARTO. The Saviour.

the brush, what others agonise to do and fail to do, is done. And yet there's something wanting :—

> "There burns a truer light of God in them. . . .
> Their works drop groundward, but themselves, I know
> Reach many a time a heaven that's shut to me. . . .
> Ah, but a man's reach should exceed his grasp,
> Or what's a heaven for? all is silver-grey,
> Placid and perfect with my art—the worse!"

Here, he says, is a work of Raphael's; the arm is wrongly put, and he could put it right, but the soul is there, and there he soars beyond his reach. All the play, the insight, and the stretch is beyond him. Had you, he says to Lucrezia, inspired me with lofty emotions, lifted me up and kept my thoughts dwelling on the Highest, it might have been. Had the mouth urged —

> "God and the glory! never care for gain,"

he might have done it. And yet, perhaps not. Incentives come from the soul itself; he had chosen earthly love, thus is it ordained.

> "What would one have?
> In heaven, perhaps, new chances, one more chance—
> Four great walls in the New Jerusalem
> Meted on each side by the angel's reed,
> For Leonard, Rafael, Angelo and me
> To cover——"

But yet the chances are not equal, for still there is Lucrezia—as I choose.

This subtle and powerful analysis of character

applies also to Andrea's art. Beautiful as his workmanship is, it has lost much of the spiritual. The harshness and rigidity of the early masters are gone; their asceticism has given place to a smiling sweetness, and every difficulty in art has been triumphantly overcome; but these less skilful artists reached ofttimes a heaven that was shut to Andrea. His Madonnas are wondrous creations with their large liquid eyes, enthroned queens of beauty, but he uses them not to awaken spiritual but earthly emotions. And these characteristics of his art are revealed in his conception of the Face of Christ. It is wondrously beautiful as art, it is faultless in technique, and there is that richness of colouring in it of which Andrea knew so intimately the secret; it is full too of humanity and feeling, but it is not the Christ of Nazareth, it lacks heaven. For surely to paint the Face of Christ more than Art is needed. Fra Angelico painted angels as no other artist painted them—painted scores of them, all angelic, yet all different, and he could do so because they were real to him, as real as his brethren of the monastery; he lived each day in their society, and dreamed of them through the silent watches of the night. And Angelico, though greatly inferior as an artist, could paint the Face of Christ as Del Sarto could not paint it, for, to quote again his words, "the student of painting hath need of quiet and to live without anxiety, and the dealers in the

things of Christ ought to live habitually with Christ." This is the secret of Angelico's charm and of Del Sarto's limitations. Andrea had surrendered his art to earthly passions, and he paid the price.

The illustration which we give was painted by Del Sarto for the Servite monks, and is placed upon the altar of the Church of the Annunciation in Florence. There is also a replica in the Church of the Angeli.

Amongst the great artists of the world a place in the very front must be given to Titian, whose conception of the Face of Christ we give as our next illustration. It was no less a person than Michael Angelo who said, as he looked at his picture of Danae, then on the easel: "If Titian could draw as well as he colours he would be the finest painter in the world." This sums up the judgment of posterity. It is as a colourist that Titian stands unrivalled, and his colours are so delicately wrought that it is difficult to say what colours were on his palette. In this connection we must remember that Titian was a Venetian, and had constantly before him that "melodrama of flame and gold and rose and azure and orange which the skies and lagoons of Venice yield almost daily to the eye."

There is thus a whole world of difference between the peaceful art of Umbria with its asceticism and sanctity, its God-fraught Madonnas pining after Paradise, its peaceful landscapes and waveless waters,

and the sumptuous art of Venice which had as its chief characteristics "power and stateliness, high intercourse with kingly and beautiful humanity, proud thrones and splendid pleasures." Religious life in Venice was not less sincere, but it was less celestial; it was frankly sane and worldly. Surrounded by their restless waters, they bade defiance to Pope and Prelate; the occupations of the sea swept from them morbidity and gloom; their engrossment and success in commerce gave them breadth of outlook, and serene satisfaction with their earthly conditions. Having a good hold of the things of this life, they were content to leave uncared for the things of the life to come; and being secure in their pleasures, they were not much disturbed about their sins.

Of all this glory of colour, and smiling optimism of outlook, Titian was the supreme representative, and to these qualities which were distinctly Venetian, he added artistic gifts of the very highest order. While other artists have their strength and their weaknesses, succeed in one direction and fail in another, Titian seems ever to walk in the "middle path of perfection." There is that grasp of the universal in his work which, while it satisfies the most exacting criticism, appeals to even the least discerning. Serene and composed, he treats the most exhausting subjects with a smiling ease, and seems endowed with every quality necessary for the production of the highest art.

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TITIAN. The Tribute Money.

The illustration which we give is taken from his well-known picture of "Christ and the Tribute Money," and is thus described by Messrs Crowe and Cavalcasselle in their "Life of Titian." "It is not too much to say that the Christ of the 'Tribute Money,' which long adorned the palace of the Duke of Ferrara, and now hangs in the museum of Dresden, is a work which challenges admiration after three centuries and a half, with the same irresistible certainty with which it challenged the admiration of Titian's friends and countrymen at the period of its completion. . . . Vasari reflects an opinion which holds to-day, that the 'head of Christ is stupendous and miraculous.' It was considered by all the artists of his time as the most perfect and best-handled of any that Titian ever produced; but for us it has qualities of a higher merit than those of mere treatment. Simple as the subject is, the thought which it embodies is very subtle. Christ turns toward the questioning Pharisee and confirms with His eye the gesture of His hand, which points to the coin. His face is youthful, its features and short curly beard are finely framed in a profusion of flowing locks. The Pharisee to the right stands in profile before Jesus, holds the coin, and asks the question. The contrast is sublime between the majestic calm and elevation, and what Quandt calls the 'Godlike Beauty' of Christ, and the low cunning and coarse air of the Pharisee; between

the delicate chiselling of the features, the soft grave eye and pure cut mouth of the Saviour, and sharp, aquiline nose or the crafty glance of the crop-haired malignant Jew. It is a peculiarity which Titian has caught from Palma, and even carried out in Palma's manner, that he contrasts the fair complexion and marble smoothness of Christ's skin with the rough and weather-beaten tan of His tempter. The hand, every finger of which points gracefully and naturally to the effigy of Cæsar on the coin, is manly in spite of its delicacy, and not a whit less strong than that of the Pharisee, whose joints are gnarled with work. The form of a boatman in his working-day shirt, whose arm is hairy in its strength and swarthy from exposure, is pitted against that of the Redeemer, whose gesture, shape, and dress reflect the elevation of His life and thoughts. The form of Christ was never conceived by any of the Venetians of such ideal beauty as this. Nor has Titian ever done better; and it is quite certain that no one, Titian himself included, within the compass of the North Italian Schools, reproduced the human shape with more nature and truth, and with greater delicacy of modelling. Amidst the profusion of locks that falls to Christ's shoulders there are ringlets of which we may count the hairs, and some of these are so light that they seem to float on air, as if ready to wave at the spectator's breath. Nothing can exceed the brightness and sheen or the transparent delicacy of

the colours. The drapery is admirable in shade and fold, and we distinguish with ease the loose texture of the bright red tunic, and that of the fine broad cloth which forms the blue mantle. The most perfect easel picture of which Venice ever witnessed the production, this is also the most polished work of Titian. In it he shows himself indeed the disciple of Palma, the rival of Giorgione, and the jealous competitor of Dürer; yet we see that he copies none of these masters, but reveals the creative talent of one unsurpassed in his day for skill and original power."

Titian's life was a long series of triumphs. Kings and Princes vied with each other for the command of his services; riches and honour were heaped upon him; and he lived to a great age. To the end he painted with untiring enthusiasm and skill; and when at last extreme age had turned his eyes to see the near approach of death, he sought a last resting-place in the "chapel of the Crucified Saviour." "Dear to me," he writes, "are the mountains of Cadore, and the rushing waters of the Piave, and the murmur of the winds in the pine trees, where my home lies far away. But not there! In the city where I have laboured, in the church where I achieved my first triumph—bury me there. Promise to carry me there, and I will yet live to paint for you another Christ—a Christ of pity that should be more near to what He is than any that has yet been painted,

even as I am by so many years nearer to seeing Him myself." But the Pietà was never finished, for the plague sweeping then over Europe, and slaying its tens of thousands, claimed him as its most illustrious victim.

Ruskin calls Correggio, whose conception of the Face of Christ we give next, "The captain of the painter's art as such." "Other men," he goes on to say, "have nobler or more numerous gifts, but as a painter, master of the art of laying colour so as to be lovely, Correggio is alone."

Correggio appears to posterity as a meteor in Italian Art. Little is known of his youth, still less of his early teachers; he died young, and was unknown amongst the great; he had no noble patrons, and during his life his greatness was almost unrecognised; nevertheless he is worthy of his place amongst the greatest in the greatest days of painting.

The characteristic of Correggio is his radiant optimism, his art is full of the joy of the senses. To many this is a world of gloom and sadness where men must pine and women must pray, but to Correggio's happy eyes it was a world of pure delight. His jocund spirit, untroubled by earthly vicissitudes, seemed to lift him above the sphere of sadness into realms of happy emotions. Within this magic circle Correggio dwells alone. Da Vinci broke through the solemn traditions of Art and dared to paint a smile upon the Virgin's lips; but it is full

of pensiveness, nearer to tears than to laughter. Correggio painted also a smile, and it was the free, radiant smile of happy, healthful motherhood. His children too are no longer solemn and demure; they are little rogues full of impish frolic, who will not sit still and composed while the saints worship them; and even the saints seem to feel the spell of their happiness, and seem more willing to discard their heavy mitres than to worship and pray. Correggio thus created a world of his own, and in that world of happy life he brought a whole host of happy angels and happy human beings, and gave them an Eden to dwell in with no trailing serpent to tempt, and no tree of luscious fruit forbidden to their touch.

This sense of overflowing life, the passion for the beautiful, his joy of the world, his amazing sensibility to light and colour, which made him unique amongst painters, unfitted him also for certain spheres of art, for those highest spheres indeed which require vision and severity, the majesty of discord rather than the seductiveness of sweet sounds. In the realm of tragedy Correggio moved without understanding; he belonged to fairy land, not to a world of grim realities, haunted by pain and sickness. Hence in those subjects which require the deepest reach, such as the agony in the garden or the sufferings of the cross, his very grace and sweetness of style destroy his effectiveness.

The illustration which we give is taken from the

well-known "Ecce Homo" of the National Gallery. The words of Scripture upon which the painting is founded are these: "Then came Jesus forth, wearing the crown of thorns, and the purple robe. And Pilate saith unto them, Behold the Man!"

For a subject like this, calling forth the highest powers in the domain of tragedy, Correggio had no qualifications. The exercise of his great qualities here does violence to his subject, for though every face is beautiful not one is convincing. The Face of Christ lacks strength: neither the grief nor the resignation are profoundly expressed upon it, it is sweetly sad, sentimentally tender, and the hands which Correggio paints always with such slenderness and beauty are here limp and weak. On the left is seen the figure of Pilate, genial and kindly with a look of evident self-satisfaction, while in front the Virgin—introduced for the first time—sinks into the arms of Mary Magdalene. From the standpoint of art the work is beautifully executed, but as an interpretation of the event its very beauty offends, its weak sentiment mocks the solemn grandeur of the scene, and its exaggeration trifles with the sublime loneliness of Christ as He is presented by Pilate to the people. This picture, indeed, marks the last phase of that long struggle which began when the pursuit of the sensuously beautiful entered into conflict with the austere spirit of Christianity. With Correggio, the gods and nymphs of Hellas have finally prevailed.

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CORREGGIO. Ecce Homo.

Rischgitz.

CHAPTER VIII

The Decadent Period

"Who walks behind another will never pass him by."—M. Angelo.

Correggio marks the close of a chapter in the history of sacred Art. With him the great period practically ends. The great wave which burst forth in the Renaissance having at last spent its force, the art of painting enters upon a long period of decline. The artists who follow inherit all the knowledge and much of the skill of their predecessors, but the inspiration has gone. They lack the gleam which kindles the imagination, and the glow which kindles the heart. The painters chose the same subjects, but amid waning enthusiasms they could produce nothing convincing; their art was frigid, often superficial, radically unbelieving.

In the early days from Giotto to Perugino art was full of spiritual rapture. These were the days when the world was young and fair, when men looked out upon it with child wonder in their eyes and child rapture in their hearts. Everything around them was full of marvels. It was as if having lived in some prison they had suddenly been set free, and

led into the world's light and loveliness. So a rapturous spiritual emotion breathes through all their works. With guileless curiosity they look around them, and with charming naïveté transfer to the canvas the impressions and emotions which awoke in their hearts. And as, according to the poet, "Heaven is around us in our infancy," so, to these artists with the child hearts, heaven was very near, the cloisters where they worked seemed often its vestibule, and the unseen more real than the actual world around them. Art can never regain this temper of mind, for the old story of Lot's wife contains this truth at least, that we cannot look back and live, to arrest the onward march, and to turn with longing to the past, is only to become petrified by it; when we become men we put away childish things, but always, surely, with a sigh of regret; and when we recall them in life's after days, it is to think of them as of life's purest joys. So we cannot without a sigh reflect that never again can men look at the world with such artless belief, and find it so haunted by heaven as they did. Never again can we have angel forms painted with such sincerity as those of Fra Angelico; or Madonnas with meek, mysterious eyes, so full of the dim prophecy of pain, as those of Botticelli; or landscapes so full of the calm religious peace as those upon which our eyes rest in the pictures of Pietro Perugino. These things are now "put away," and

we of an older age go back to them with a certain wistfulness, longing that something more of their artlessness and guileless credulity might have remained to transfigure the sober facts in whose solemn company we spend our lives. For surely never were the things of childhood more winning or tender than those beautiful works of Art's childhood days.

In the dawning consciousness of power which arose amongst those artists which followed, a new enthusiasm arose, which first united with and then displaced the old. No longer was art regarded as the mere handmaid of religion; artists, conscious of a new power arising within them, struck boldly out in their aim to reach the ideal, to give to all the conceptions of the imagination their perfection of beauty and of form. The artists of this next period still chose religious subjects, but the message was not now the object of their Art as much as the attainment of perfection as artists. The person of Christ was still the supreme subject, but artists approached it not with the old awe, but with a new-found sense of power, and a joy in the opportunities the subject afforded for the exercise and display of technical skill. They were not irreligious men, far from it, but they approached their subjects not primarily from the standpoint of religion, but of Art; the emotions they sought to awaken were not so much spiritual as æsthetic. This period, notwithstanding all its brilliance, carried

in it the prophecy of decay. Soon artists fell away from their high ideals, they lost reverence for their Art, they used the most lofty incidents in the life of our Lord for the display of their conceits, and thus fell into all manner of mannerisms, exaggerations, and even vulgarities. The Art of this period is characterised by a superficiality, and a certain mawkish sentimentality, which made the artists dwell upon the suffering side of the life of Christ, which they treated in a morbid and often repulsive manner.

Many things doubtless contributed to this rapid decline of Art in the latter half of the sixteenth century. Italy at this period was passing through a long and dark period of domestic misfortune and political degradation. Her plains and cities had been ravished by greedy usurpers, and, broken up into small commonwealths, she became the prey of the armies of Europe. For years, France, Spain, and the Papacy had made her wealth the object of their rapacity, and when at length she passed under the cruel dominance of Spain, her independence went from her, an alien race held her citadels, and her cities became desolated by intolerable burdens of taxation. With her nationality humbled, her commerce failing, and all hope gone out of her, it was not possible that the great era of Art could be prolonged. These are not the conditions in which the arts flourish, or in which the highest work is produced.

Another reason which can be offered for the

rapid decline of Art at this period is the natural exhaustion which follows times of prolonged and strenuous effort. All things in this world run their course, "they have their day and cease to be"; when the impulse which introduces them spends itself they pass away, and after an interval are succeeded by something different. It is seldom that a new impulse arises without an intervening time of re-action and lassitude. The great ideals which burst forth at the Renaissance had now spent themselves, no new impulse was forthcoming, and so through exhaustion and lack of fresh inspiration Art passed into a period of decline.

While this period is not marked by any supreme works, it must not be assumed that nothing worthy was produced. Critics, in their zeal for effect, have lost all sense of proportion, and in order to glorify still further the "giants before the flood," have branded as base and unnatural all that came after it. This, as Ruskin's criticism, for instance, of Domenichino's Art, makes very good reading in the realm of invective, but as criticism it reveals worse faults than the Art it criticises. Allowances must always be made for the conditions under which men produce their work. It is difficult to maintain high emotions under dwindling enthusiasms and waning interests. Great men require great epochs. Although atmosphere is not everything, it counts for much, and the atmosphere of the latter half of the sixteenth century was such as to leave men languid and uninspired.

In the treatment of the Christ Face we must now be prepared for a further change. The aim to reach the highest perfection of beauty which inspired the artists of the period we have just been considering, and which produced so many triumphs, passes away. Another Christ enters. It is the Christ of sentiment and of sorrow, the "despised and rejected of men," whom now in Italian Art we are to meet with.

It is usual to group the artists in this declining period of Italian art in three separate schools—the Mannerists, the Eclectics, and the Naturalists.

The Mannerists were so called because of their imitation of the style of preceding masters. In the work of these great artists, in the "terribleness" of Angelo, the brilliant colouring of Titian, the radiance and charm of Correggio, the epitome of excellence seemed to have been reached. Artists began to look upon their masterpieces with despair of ever producing anything higher. Finding that virtue had gone out of them, they sought to retain the standard of excellence reached by imitating the excellences of those who had gone before. This was a fatal mistake, and with such a purpose animating them no healthy or lasting Art could be produced. When the artist feels intensely he finds his own form of expression; the subject and the form are born together. Where there is no intense feeling there is no great Art. Though the Mannerists imitated ever so cleverly the great masters who preceded them, they

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Alinari.

BAROCCIO. The Saviour.

doomed themselves to mediocrity. Nothing can reach beyond the common levels which has not the stamp of originality, which is not born from within.

> "Poems distilled from other poems pass away,
> The swarm of reflectors and the polite pass, and leave ashes;
> Admirers, importers, obedient persons make but the soil of literature."

The consequence was an enormous output of inferior work, and a consequent corruption of the public taste. "We paint," says Vasari, "six paintings in a year, while the earlier masters took six years for one painting." Nothing could better sum up the declining spirit than the unconscious egotism in this assertion of a contemporary historian and artist. When Art is measured by the bulk and by the rapidity of its output, its days are numbered.

While all the great masters had their imitators, the one to whose greatness most devotion was paid was Correggio. The Mannerists have no great name, but in a school of mediocrity the artist of greatest merit, and of most originality and interest, is Baroccio, whose rendering of the Saviour we give as our first illustration. Baroccio was born in Urbino in 1528, and was at one time employed in the Vatican; but an attempt having been made by his rivals to poison him, he returned to his home, and there settled down to execute the many commissions he received. All that has been said about the

decay of art, and the hopeless efforts of the Mannerists to reach a high level, is illustrated here. The conception is not without merit, the colouring is rich and harmonious, but the attitude is affected, and the expression weak and sentimental. Like all imitators, he has caught and exaggerated the weaknesses of his master without the strength, and the effect is not satisfying. There is beauty, but it is sickly, and we cannot think of it as the Face of the "Strong Son of God, Immortal Love."

An illustration of Baroccio's style, and of the decay of taste of this period, may be found in Baroccio's picture known as "Our Lady of the Cat," which is in the National Gallery. Here the Holy Family are represented as looking on with amused interest at a cat which is striving to reach a bird held out in the hands of the child Baptist. The bird flutters in terror, while the Madonna points the Infant Saviour to the efforts of the cat to reach it. All seem intensely amused, and the artist, with a sublime sense of fitness, has introduced into his painting the cross! It stands in a corner of the room, behind the terrified bird, whose agonies they all seem so much to enjoy.

Following the Mannerists, and representing a healthy revolt, there arose a school of painters known as the Eclectics, or choosers. This name was given them owing to their avowed endeavour to select from and unite the best qualities of the great

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ANNIBALE CARRACCI. Head of Christ.

masters, and thus to reach a higher standard of Art. This ambition, as it has been pointed out, doomed their style to the "sterility of hybrids." "Like Medea operating upon decrepit Æson, the founders of the Eclectic School chopped up the limbs of painting which had ceased to throb with organic life, and having pieced them together, set the composite machine in motion on the path of studied method." Hopeless as this effort proved to re-instate painting, or inspire artists with great ideals, the Eclectics nevertheless did much to revive the artistic spirit, and there are names belonging to this school which, had they lived in more invigorating times, might have ranked amongst the great, and which, in their own times, are to be mentioned with honour and respect. The founders of the Eclectic School were the three Carracci, the most distinguished of whom was Annibale, born 1560. His robust individuality helped him to cast off the shackles of an age profoundly conscious of its own loss of power, and he stands out from amongst the artists of the period as one gifted with great freshness and vigour. This beautiful conception of the Face of Christ, which we give as our next illustration, is one of the great treasures of the Dresden Gallery, and is worthy of a place amid the first rank of beautiful conceptions. There is a joyousness in the composition, a force and meaning in the Face, as well as a winning attractiveness, which lifts this impression high out

of the range of ordinary conceptions. The great eyes look out from the canvas upon the beholder with kindly love, and while the artist has got rid of all convention, the conception remains nobly impressive and uplifting. Annibale is famous as the first artist who practised landscape painting as a separate department of Art, and who thus opened the way for the illustrious names which were to follow.

A greater artist, however, than any of the Carracci, was Guido Reni, who belonged to the same school, and who, although hampered by the restraints of the age, made a lasting name for himself in the realm of Art. Born in 1575, near Bologna, at an early age he showed a decided taste for painting, and when about the age of twenty he entered the school of the Carracci, he soon became one of their most distinguished pupils. A few years later he followed Annibale Caracci to Rome, and there remained for nearly twenty years, gaining universal admiration. During this period he painted the famous picture entitled "Aurora preceding the Chariot of the Sun, surrounded by the Hours," one of the most frequently copied pictures in existence. It is to be found on the ceiling of the Garden-house in the Rospigliosi Palace, Rome; and it has been numbered as one of the twelve greatest pictures of the world. According to his biographer, Guido left Rome abruptly, and in great indignation.

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GUIDO RENI. Ecce Homo.

Having been commissioned to paint one of the altar-pieces of St Peter's, for which he had received 400 scudi in advance, he allowed a few years to pass without beginning the work. This delay enraged one of the cardinals, who taunted Guido with receiving money for work which he had no intention of executing. Guido immediately returned the money, and within a few days turned his back upon Rome; and although every effort was made, nothing would induce him to return.

From this time until his death in 1642, Guido remained in Bologna, and lived there in great splendour. He was a man of profuse liberality, and of a sincere piety deeply engrained in superstition. Notwithstanding his princely income, Guido died in debt, owing, it is said, to his love of the gaming-table, which arose to a passion with him in his later years. It was during this latter period that he was said to have sold his time at a fixed price per hour to certain dealers, one of whom stood over him, watch in hand, as he worked. Like Raphael, he painted in three different styles. The first was characterised by force rather than by sweetness. During his stay in Rome he advanced greatly as a colourist, and his decorative paintings of this period are full of grace and are rich in tone. In later life he affected a silvery tone, and his works lose much of their originality. The illustration which we give is the "Ecce Homo" of the National Gallery. Of all the

conceptions of the Face of Christ this is the best known, and the most popular. It represents that tragic moment in the history of the Passion, when, having scourged Jesus, Pilate brings Him forth before the people, hoping that their murderous hatred might melt as they regarded Him, and that it might yet be possible to secure His relief. "And Pilate said to them, Behold the Man." "When the chief priests therefore and officers saw Him, they cried out, saying, Crucify Him, Crucify Him." No moment in all that terrible day of agony offers such possibilities for moving and dramatic treatment as this, when alone and friendless the Christ stands before His nation rejected and despised. Most of the great masters felt the possibilities which the scene called forth, and braced themselves for the effort, and the conception which they universally adopted is that of physical anguish on the Face of Christ. It has been left to modern Art to conceive a nobler motive, and to represent Christ as suffering the cruel wrongs of men, yet triumphant and calm in the sense of spiritual victory. This sense of anguish and suffering is expressed by Guido Reni with a power and pathos which profoundly moves the heart, but it displays an exaggeration of sentiment, which began to characterise the Art of this epoch, and which was one of the evil effects of the Counter-Reformation. For long years Italy and the whole of Europe had been groaning under

the corruption and unheeding worldliness of the Catholic Church, until at length Luther arose, and dealt such staggering blows to that ancient institution as to threaten her extinction. Through the astuteness and ability of a succession of popes, and through the counter-movement under Loyola and the Jesuits, this was not only averted, but such new life was brought into the Church, as largely to reinstate her in her old authority. Whatever effect this Counter-Reformation might be held to have produced upon religion, there can be no doubt that its effect upon Art was disastrous. The form of piety it expressed was no longer naïve or simple, but hysterical and sacerdotal. Its appeal was to the emotions. "Extravagantly ideal in ecstatic Magdalenes and Maries, extravagantly harsh in dogmatic mysteries and the ecclesiastical parade of power, extravagantly soft in sentimental tenderness and tearful piety—Italian art, after a glorious reign, sunk into decrepitude. Its artists, no longer inspired by lofty ideals nor possessed by masculine vigour of fancy or execution, became languishing and weakly emotional, and perished at last in a sickly effeminacy."

The fatal growth of this movement, found already in Guido Reni, becomes more pronounced in the "Ecce Homo" of Guercino. Born in 1592, Guercino came under the direct influence of the Counter-Reformation when it began to power-

fully affect Italian Art. His early works show great skill and considerable originality, but, affected by the prevailing spirit, he became insipid. The reader will have no difficulty in perceiving the one step further which Guercino takes into the realm of sentiment by comparing this illustration with that of Guido Reni, but if he desires to trace the distance which the artists of this period have wandered from the best instincts of painting, let him compare this "Ecce Homo" with that, for instance, of Antonio del Pollaiolo in the Pitti Gallery at Florence. In that beautiful conception there is no appeal to the pitying eye of the beholder. The Christ looks out from the canvas with a look not of excruciating anguish, but of divine compassion. There is no attempt made to lacerate the feelings by representing physical suffering; instead, there is a noble calm in the Face as of one who had gained a wondrous victory. The crown of thorns is only a narrow band, and it sits lightly upon the brow, while the hair is gently lifted by the breeze. The conception is full of a noble reserve and spiritual reticence, and is a triumph of refined and chastened feeling. Here the anguish is almost insupportable. The crown of thorns is entwined round and round until it covers the head; the fierce thorns enter into the flesh, and draw forth great drops of blood, which trickle down His Face, and fall with heavy splash upon His breast. There is no sense of victory upon His Face, no evidence of

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GUERCINO. Ecce Homo.

unseen support, none of that dignity which must have been upon the Face of Him who, when urged for His own safety to defend Himself, made no answer, who claimed the prerogatives of a King, and who, as He marched in kingly courage to the cross, refused the wormwood and the gall. Instead, the eyes are upturned in weak entreaty for pity; the film of tears, not the consciousness of innocence, makes them glisten; the mouth is open, and utters a moan of anguish, and the whole expression is that of defeat and self-pity. As an illustration of the effect of Jesuitism upon Art, this picture of Guercino's is of interest. Its exaggeration of the suffering side of our Lord's passion, its appeal to the pity of the beholder, its excitement of the emotions, and its absence of restraint and of lofty spiritual instincts, are along the line of those aims and characteristics which enabled Loyola and his followers to hand back to the popes, but sadly impaired, that empire over the consciences of the faithful which the monk at Wittenburg had at one time threatened to destroy.

A further step into the realm of weakened sentimentality is apparent in the works of Carlo Maratti, whose conception of the Face of Christ we give as our next illustration. Maratti was born in 1625, and enjoyed the favour of no less than six successive popes. He was an ardent imitator of Raphael, and was employed by Clement XI. to restore the frescoes by Raphael in the Vatican, which, through neglect, had

almost sunk into a state of decay. His work, however, though pleasing, lacks originality. His painting of the Baptism of Christ, from which this is taken, is the best known of his works, and we give it as an illustration to show the downward tendency of Art, and its failure to produce anything spiritually convincing. The Face here is beautiful, but no one could accept it as the Christ. It is sweet, but it lacks all conception of divinity; there is a total want of any impressiveness about it; and while it copies Correggio, it lacks Correggio's power and insight. This subject of the Baptism of our Lord is a favourite study in religious art, and it offers a situation full of dramatic possibilities. Almost all the great masters have been attracted by it, and yet few have succeeded in investing the subject with dignity and impressiveness. The most spiritual is that of Fra Angelico, and one has only to compare his conception of the Face of Christ to see how far Art has wandered in the broad path which leadeth to destruction. With all its crudeness, no one can fail to perceive the intense spirituality shown in every line of Angelico's painting; full of divine calm, with folded hands, and eyes that look upward with a holy joy, the Christ awaits the act of baptism, while the dove descends, emblem of the Holy Spirit, to endue Him with power from on high. Here there is only feebleness; the languishing, drooping head suggests nothing but weakness; the drawing and colouring are there, but

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MARATTI. Baptism of Christ.

the soul is gone; the devout awe, the masculine vigour, the sense of triumph, which the great masters exhibited almost in every line and curve, have passed away, and all the hectic and neurotic emotionalism of succeeding artists failed to recover it.

This last picture may be taken to illustrate the expiring efforts of religious Art in Italy. Carlo Dolci attained an immense popularity, and it is deplorable that in the cheap prints reproduced by chromo-lithography in tens of thousands, it is the unhealthy Art of this period which finds favour in popular religious illustrations. Nor is this hard to understand. Instead of the austerity of the true Christian ideal, the Counter-Reformation offered the blandishments of ecstasy, and the unhealthy glow of a sensual mysticism. Its effort was to make religion easy and attractive, to woo the alienated back to the fold by smiles and blandishments; and while gently imposing the same shackles, to cover them over with an ornament of gold. Both Art and Theology became seductive, and consequently insincere. The revival was not a revival of spiritual religion but of Catholicism, a revival which aimed not at liberty but at a reaction against liberty. In this unhealthy atmosphere Art could not survive; it became cloyed with its own sweetness, until, goaded by sheer detestation, the Naturalists arose, a school of painters who rushed into the opposite extreme of violence and atheism. Under this furious onslaught

religious Art in Italy may be said miserably to have perished.

In this illustration which we give these characteristics and influences will readily be traced. The luxuriant hair falling in masses of curls upon the shoulders, the upturned entreating eyes, the parted lips, the sweetness and effeminacy of the conception all illustrate the cloying sentimentality of the Art of the period. It must not be concluded that as an artist Dolci was void of all merit. His gifts are considerable, but he was the victim of his day and generation. The glorious movement which burst forth at the dawn of the Renaissance had spent its force, and with Art it is true as of all else, that—

> "The old order changeth, yielding place to new,
> And God fulfils Himself in many ways,
> Lest one good custom should corrupt the world."

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Rischgitz.

CARLO DOLCI. The Saviour.

CHAPTER IX

Spanish Types

"The One remains, the many change and pass."—Shelley.

In the history of nations Spain outdistances all others in the swiftness of her rise, the splendour of her prosperity, and the suddenness of her fall. She flashed up with meteoric swiftness in the fifteenth century, blazed with meteoric splendour for a century and a half, then, having burned her strength out, slowly sank into obscurity. Under Charles V. and his son the armies of Spain were the terror and the scourge of Europe; Spanish ships sailed the "ultimate seas," and brought back the gold and glamour of the New World to excite the imaginations and inflame the passions of her people. In four generations more all this had vanished; her glory was taken from her, and amongst the nations she became an object of compassion rather than of envy or of fear. The traveller who walks through the grass-grown courts of her ancient castles and untenanted palaces, who tries to discover in the peasants of Old Castile the grand air of their ancestors, or seeks amongst the inhabitants of Granada or Seville that old fire which

swept the Moors from their fertile plains, can only turn aside with a sigh and reflect on the vanity of human greatness.

Contemporaneous with the great period of her history is the great period of her Art. They rose together with equal suddenness, burned with equal splendour, and sank together in a like decay. Yet though the Art of Spain had no infancy, though the great period covers little more than a century, so great were the triumphs of her artists that she yields the palm to Italy alone; while many are found who declare that in her annals she possesses the greatest name of all.

Although Spanish artists received their first inspiration from Italian sources, they did not become mere copyists; they developed a school of painting which became essentially national, with well-marked and clearly defined characteristics.

The first characteristic of Spanish Art which we have to notice is that it is entirely religious in its subjects. Spanish artists delight to illustrate the many legends which surround the Madonna, the lives of the saints, or the outstanding features, and especially the sorrowful features of our Lord's life and passion. This deeply religious bias was nurtured in them through the long conflict which they were called upon to wage with the infidel Moor. The Moors landed in Spain in 711, and in three years they overran the whole country wit the exception of the mountainous districts in the N.W.

A struggle ensued which lasted almost without a break for eight centuries, and which on the Spanish side became not merely a struggle for independence but a religious crusade. Slowly through the succeeding centuries the Moors were beaten back, and the Crescent gave way to the Cross; but it was not until the closing years of the fifteenth century that Spanish soil was freed from the presence of the infidel. Through all these long centuries the nation had struggled with fanatical zeal for the glory of Mother Church; they carried into the fight all the courage, but also all the cruelty of the Spanish nature; and few pages in European history are more stained by acts of fanaticism and ferocity than those which chronicle the treatment of the infidel and the Jew at the hands of Spain. The influence which these centuries of religious conflict produced upon the national mind and temperament was enormous. It gave a definitely religious bias to all their thoughts and public acts. Since the war in which they were engaged was religious, and its main object the triumph of the Cross, the ecclesiastic was called in to all the important councils, and his presence was felt in every issue of the national life. A fruitful source for the growth of superstition and ecclesiastical despotism was thus opened up, and these became the main characteristics of Spanish life.

The effect of all this upon Art can be readily imagined. More than in any other country Art

became the servant of the Church. While Italian artists turned with ease, and without any sense of indecorum, from the treatment of scriptural subjects, to scenes of amorous passion, from painting the Madonna with her sorrows to the joyous revelries of the goddess of love, Spanish artists frowned at such exploits as sacrilege, and turned themselves to their sacred tasks.

The second characteristic of Spanish Art is its gravity and seriousness. This it owes partly to the national temperament, but partly also to the influence of the Inquisition. This mysterious and terrorising tribunal held the nation and the lives of the people in its fanatical clutch, and it did so in the supposed interests of religion and orthodoxy. No system, perhaps, ever conceived by the brain of man has accomplished more relentless work, or executed that work more thoroughly, than that tribunal presided over by Torquemada, Caraffa, and the Inquisitors-General who followed them. To their tortuous and gloomy minds heresy appeared as the unpardonable sin, and to save their flocks from its taint they made use of the thumbscrew and the rack, secret tribunals, and autos-da-fé. They terrorised men's minds and excited the basest human passions by their public spectacles, in which the condemned heretic, clad in a "sanbenito"—a coarse yellow frock upon which they worked-in flaming red devils and flames—was burned alive over a slow fire.

This idea, that heresy can be extirpated by force, and the Kingdom of God safeguarded by fear, is of ancient lineage, has had the support of many illustrious names, and has played a peculiarly malign part in the history of mankind. Spain only differed from other nations at this time in the excesses to which this idea was carried, and in the success which attended the efforts of the Inquisitors. The effect upon the national character, however, was such as all may deplore. Even the spirit of the most heroic of men breaks down before a secret and merciless tribunal, working in darkness and by stealth, endowed with unlimited powers, and curbed by no superior authority. It undermined courage, stifled freedom of opinion, introduced a system of espionage into every section of society, and destroyed that sense of public safety without which there can be no healthy progress. The debasing spectacles, too, which at first terrified, at last delighted the onlookers, and, by arousing the worst passions, degraded public life.

The influence of the Inquisitors upon Art was no less pronounced. They crushed it within certain prescribed channels, they banished everything that was secular, and strictly forbade "the making or exposing of immodest paintings or sculptures on pain of excommunication, a fine of 1500 ducats, and a year's exile." They had officers whose duty it was to see this carried out, and it is recorded of a painter

of Cordova that he was imprisoned for introducing into a painting of the Crucifixion, St John in trunk hose, and the Virgin in an embroidered petticoat.

While these restrictions did not stifle Art altogether, as might have been expected, they gave the work of the Spanish artists a morbid and ascetic character; their compositions are usually dark and solemn, the subjects austere, and the treatment decorous and grave. The nude is never permitted to the earlier artists, and to such a length was this decorum carried that writers condemned even the exposing of the feet of the Madonna.

These characteristics which we have noted as belonging to Spanish Art are admirably illustrated in the paintings of Luis de Morales, who was born in Badajoz at the beginning of the sixteenth century. Morales won from his countrymen the *soubriquet* of "El Divino," because of his perfect execution, but also, no doubt, because he shunned all secular subjects and devoted his pencil exclusively to depicting Scriptural and sacred incidents, choosing by preference those which were sorrowful in character. The National Gallery possesses a most interesting Virgin and Child by this painter, and the following quotation from its descriptive catalogue aptly sums up his main characteristics. "His subjects, always devotional, were mostly of the saddest, as the Saviour in

Page 122. *Brann, Clement.*

MORALES. Ecce Homo.

His hours of suffering, or dead in His mother's arms, or the weeping Madonna. The object is to excite devotion through images of pain, and to this end the forms are attenuated, and the faces disfigured by the marks of past or present anguish. Of beauty there is little, of dignity less. The drawing is faulty, although there is a laboured effort at anatomical precision. These deficiencies are somewhat atoned for by warm and not unpleasing general colour, though the flesh is modelled in a monotonous brown." As a type of Spanish art of the period this illustration is of the very deepest interest. The Christ Face expresses the very extremity of anguish, and the conception not only reveals the melancholic and brooding temperament of the artist, but also the type of the Face of Christ which most appealed to the devotional instincts of the Spanish people in the early days of the sixteenth century. These were the days when the authority of the Church was supreme, when her lordship over the consciences of men was undisputed; and it may well be questioned whether the much-maligned pastors of Puritan times ever led their people into such excesses of austerity, or surrounded the Christian faith with such unrelieved gloom, as did these priests and monks of Catholic Spain.

The next illustration introduces us to a greater artist, and to one of the noblest types of the Face

of Christ which art has produced. This conception is worthy of the most careful examination, since it expresses the highest reach of Spanish devotional art. The Face is a noble one, full of the gravity and seriousness which we expect from a Spanish artist. The reader also who cares to turn over the pages to the Flemish artists, and compares some of their types with this, will be interested in tracing the marked influence of Flemish art on that of Spain at this period. This noble conception, however, is lifted far above all conscious imitation, and it is difficult to write of it in terms which do not appear to be those of exaggeration. It is the creation of Vincente Joanes, better known as Juan Juanes, the founder of the school of Valencia. Born in 1523, when Italian art had passed its meridian, his mind still dwelt in, and his Art remained inspired by mediæval superstitions. He was the Fra Angelico of Spain; his study became an oratory; and so devout was he that it is related of him that he never began a painting of Christ or the Virgin without fasting and prayer. His portrait suggests a character given over to melancholy and to brooding on sorrowful themes. No secular subject was ever treated by his brush; he had consecrated his Art to the service of the Church, and of the Church alone. A story, which reveals his own character and the popular conceptions of his times, is told, in which a Jesuit priest is said to

have had a dream in which the Virgin appeared to him clad in white, with an over-mantle of blue, and standing on a crescent moon, and demanded that her portrait should be painted as she had thus revealed herself. The commission was entrusted to Juanes, who strove to reproduce the figure as explained to him by the priest; but strive as he would, all was unavailing—neither priest nor painter was satisfied. At length Juanes gave himself over to fasting and prayer, in which devout exercises he was assisted by the holy monks, and resuming his labours, he was immediately successful. The picture, when completed, was hailed with rapturous delight; it became famous for its miraculous powers of healing, and received the name of "La Purisima" by the grateful inhabitants of Valencia.

As an artist Juanes admirably represents the gravity and decorum of the Spanish Art of that period; the backgrounds of his pictures are mostly in gold, his colours are rich and deep, and though his drawing is stiff, his work is full of invention and power of expression. Of Juanes as a painter of the Face of Christ, Maxwell, in his "Annals of Spanish Art," gives the following suggestive criticism :—

"As Raphael has never been rivalled in painting the Virgin, so Juanes deserves to be called the peculiar painter of the Divine Son. His conceptions are bodied forth by one of the most beautiful types

of the male countenance ever formed by the pencil. Leonardo da Vinci was himself less happy in his treatment of that magnificent subject; had he finished his head of Christ in the matchless 'Cena,' he could hardly have surpassed the noble delineations of Juanes. In the hands of Roman artists the Saviour is often little more than a beautiful Apollo copied from the marbles of Greece; at Venice, a noble personage of the blood of Barberigo or Contarini; while in the later and feebler school of Bologna His beauty sinks into effeminacy, and the Man-God into a mere mortal Adonis. Juanes, with higher thoughts and finer skill, has taken his idea of our Lord from the poetry of Solomon, the history of the Evangelists, and the visions of St John. In his 'Christ' the ineffable mildness of expression belonging to Him whose voice was sweet, and His countenance comely, who would that little children should come to Him, and whose banner over His people was love, is united with the majesty which befitted that mysterious Being 'who walked amid the golden candlesticks, whose Face was like the sun shining in its strength, and His Voice like the sound of many waters, who had the keys of death and hell, and who shall come to judge the world in the glory of His Father.' His lofty brow and deep brown eyes are full of dignity and power; benevolence plays on the delicately formed lips, and the whole Face of more than mortal beauty is winning as was that of St

Page 126. *Brann, Clement.*

JUAN JUANES. The Christ.

Francis de Sales, on whom infants delighted to gaze, and women looked with involuntary love."

The most important of Juanes' works are to be found in his native Valencia. He delights to represent the Saviour in the act of dispensing the holy elements, with the wafer and the chalice in His hands. Our illustration is taken from one of the most famous of his works, now in Madrid. The background is of gold, the Saviour wears a violet-coloured robe, peculiar to Juanes, and a red mantle. In His right hand He holds a sacramental wafer, in His left the cup well-known in Spain as "The Holy Chalice of Valencia."

There is another characteristic of Spanish Art in addition to those already enumerated which appears in the works of the two great artists whose conceptions of the Christ Face follow. This is its intense naturalism. The source of this is to be found in the national spirit, and in the fact that Art in Spain was used to enforce dogma, to inculcate spiritual truth, and implant mystical ideas. In the midst of a people so inclined to superstition as the Spaniards, the thing typified became an actual event. Instead of appealing to the imagination, it became a reality; and a story is told in which a painter painting the Virgin on a lofty scaffolding, and finding it giving way, immediately called to her to save him. In response, the painted arm materialised, stretched itself out from the canvas, held the artist until he

was rescued, and then withdrew into the picture again. Thus even the most mystical subjects were painted in a naturalistic and material way, and this sense of realism pervades the whole of Spanish art.

In its highest form this tendency is found in the works of Velasquez, the greatest painter of the Spanish School—in the opinion of many capable of giving an opinion, the greatest painter of any school. He is essentially the painter most admired by his successors, and a series of quotations from great authorities would reveal a surprising unanimity as to his genius. "Before a work of Velasquez," wrote Henri Regnault, "I feel as if I were looking at reality through an open window." "The air he breathes is our own," says Bonnat, "the sky above him is that under which we live. Before his creations we receive the same impression as that made upon us by living beings." Nor are our own artists and critics behind in their chorus of praise. "What we are all attempting to do with great labour," says Sir Joshua Reynolds, "Velasquez does at once"; while Whistler declares that Art "dipped the Spaniard's brush in light and air, and made his people live within their frames, and stand upon their legs, that all nobility and sweetness and tenderness and magnificence should be theirs by right."

Velasquez was born in the last year of the sixteenth century, so that Spanish Art reached

the hey-day of its splendour when Italian art had degenerated into mannerisms and artificiality. He studied under Herrera, who was a hard taskmaster, and Pacheco, who gave him his daughter for a wife; he spent two years in Italy, but he was the pupil of no school; he shook himself free from every trammel, and went straight to nature for his inspiration. He was wont to search the streets for models, and he painted his compositions directly on the canvas. Velasquez' career was, like Titian's, a long succession of triumphs. He reached Madrid in 1623—he was then twenty-four years of age—and almost immediately his genius was recognised. At that time Philip IV. occupied the throne, to which he had succeeded at the early age of sixteen. His court was then the most brilliant in Europe; he had surrounded himself with a galaxy of artists, poets, and men of genius, and gave promise himself of no mean talents. This promise, however, was not fulfilled. He allowed pleasure and indolence to rule over him, and he failed to become the "captain of his soul." His rule he handed over to his minister Olvarez, who used it to gratify his own ambitions, and from his feeble reign may be dated the beginning of that decline of Spanish influence which ran with increasing momentum to its close. Philip, however, can lay claim to one distinction in which he outdistances all competitors—he has been painted more often than any other monarch, and by

the greatest of portraitists. "In youth, in maturity, in declining years; on foot and on horseback; dressed for the chase, or already absorbed in its pleasures; alone, or with his daughter and his queen; in the richest of armour, or more plainly clad and lowly kneeling at his prayers—few are the actions of his life in which we cannot, even at this distance of time, see him actually before us." The National Gallery possesses two characteristic portraits—one of Philip in his youth, and the other of him in maturer years. In the latter, which is regarded as one of the finest portraits in the world, we see the amazing fidelity with which the artist has laid bare his character, his cold eye and cruel underlip, and above all his stony impassiveness of expression, his "talent for dead silence and marble immobility."

It was into this court that Velasquez was received; from his first entry into Madrid, he became Court painter, and, unlike the majority of his fellow-craftsmen, never tasted the bitterness of neglect nor the pangs of poverty.

Velasquez was a great craftsman and a great observer, but he was not a great religious painter. When he turned away from the sickly Court it was not to paint mystical figures of saints but to sketch on his canvas the faces of the streets. He escaped from the watchful eye of the Inquisition by devoting himself to portraiture, and although, no doubt, he

conformed to the customs of the period, and paid respect to the requirements of religion, his heart was not in it. Alone amongst the great painters of Spain he turned aside from religious subjects; his mind was too healthy and robust to be influenced by the effeminate type of mysticism which then abounded; and even when he did turn his pencil to Scriptural subjects, he flung aside the weak and emaciated conventional types of saints and angels and introduced his own masculine vehemence and convincing realism. As it has been truly remarked, "No Virgin ever descended into his studio. No cherubs hovered around his pallet. He did not work for priest or ecstatic anchorite, but for plumed kings and belted knights; hence the neglect and partial failure of his holy and mythological pictures—holy, like those of Caravaggio, in nothing but name,—groups rather of low life, and that so truly painted as still more to mar, by a treatment not in harmony with the subject, the elevated sentiment."

The illustration which we have selected from Velasquez' works is the well-known "Christ at the Column," presented to the National Gallery in 1883. In this intensely dramatic rendering of a subject seldom attempted, we perceive the chief characteristics of Velasquez' style. The picture is not a pleasing one, and the painter did not intend it to be so; into it he has thrown all his tremendous realism,

and has produced an actual scene in which the agonies of the Sufferer are depicted with such intensity that the onlooker is almost sensible of pain. The scourgers have just departed, and have left their instruments contemptuously behind them. The absence of all accessories concentrates attention upon the central Figure, whose hands are blackened by the cords which bind them, and whose shoulder is stained with the blood of the wounds which the scourgers have inflicted. Yet full of compassion He turns His head to the child who has entered the darkened cell, and who, with hands clasped, kneels in prayer. Behind the child her guardian angel stands with eyes downcast; she points to the Christ, bidding her tender charge behold Him with adoration and with love. This is one of the few paintings for which Velasquez made a preparatory sketch, and the lasting impression which it conveys is that of overpowering realism. This picture has often received the alternative title, "The Institution of Prayer," but this is to turn the theme of the picture from the Sufferer to the child. No one can look at the picture without realising that the whole work concentrates itself upon the suffering Christ, and though it lacks delicacy of spiritual apprehension, its terrible realism powerfully affects the onlooker.

In Murillo, second only to Velasquez in greatness, we have a very different combination of artistic qualities. He unites in himself in the highest

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VELASQUEZ. Christ at the Column.

Rischgitz.

degree those qualities which we have noticed as distinctly Spanish. With the realism which he learned from Velasquez he mixes the religious sentiment and sensuous piety which in Spain flourishes along with that cold cruelty which makes its people delight in the brutal spectacles of the arena.

Murillo's life was singularly uneventful, and is almost devoid of personal interest. Born from the midst of the common people, left an orphan at an early age, he encountered many vicissitudes. His biographers tell us that so poor was he in those early days that he was accustomed to stand in the market-place painting heads of saints to order, and according to the taste of the purchaser. These trying experiences counted to him for righteousness later on, however, for they stored his mind with those types of the gamins of the streets which appear so often, and which give such interest to his works.

Soon to the expanding ambitions of the youthful artist his native Seville became too cramped and confined; he burned to see Rome, and sit at the feet of the great masters; and so with little in his pocket and a great resolve in his heart he trudged over the weary Sierras on foot until he reached Madrid. Velasquez was at this time at the height of his fame, and to this fellow-townsman of his Murillo went to seek help and advice. Nor did he seek in vain, for the large-hearted Velasquez, whom

fame had not spoiled, offered him hospitality under his own roof, and sought by every means in his power to improve his Art and further his interests. Murillo remained in Madrid for over two years, and then abandoning his intention of proceeding to Rome, he returned to Seville. Seville at this time was one of the most opulent, and the most beautiful city in the Spanish realms. Until the reign of Philip II. it was the capital of the kingdom, and still retained within its walls many of the ancient nobility. It was called "the glory of the Spanish realms," and "the pearl of cities." Art had made within it her chief home, and the influence of the Italian renaissance was more felt in Seville than in any other city in Spain.

Murillo returned to his native city an unknown artist, but the first commission he received lifted him straight out of obscurity into the first rank, and he remains to this day the most popular artist of Spain. In his native Seville any particularly impressive painting is still called a "Murillo."

As an artist Murillo was inferior to Velasquez in all that belongs to the technical qualities of Art, nor was he superior in his love and appreciation of beauty; but his character and his work were more gentle, and his paintings, with their softness and sentiment, go straight to the hearts of the people. He painted in three distinct styles. In his early efforts the predominating shades are browns and greys; later on his colouring became rich and

warm; but his chief characteristic is what is known as his "misty style," which he adopted in painting the subjects of the Annunciation and the Conception of the Virgin. This colouring, which is like a golden vapour from which the face of the Madonna emerges, is exceedingly effective, and although there is a want of elevation in his types, there is a caressing sweetness which appeals to the popular taste.

The Face of Christ was comparatively seldom made a subject of treatment by Murillo; he was essentially a painter of the Virgin, and to her worship he dedicated his talents. This singular devotion can be understood by recalling the fact that it was in 1617, the year of Murillo's birth, that the famous bull was issued at the instigation of Spain, proclaiming the truth of the doctrine of the Immaculate Conception. Upon its publication, we are told, "Seville flew into a frenzy of joy. Archbishop de Castro performed a magnificent service in the Cathedral, and amid the thunder of the organs and the choir, the roar of all the artillery on the walls and river, and the clangour of all the bells in all the churches, swore to maintain and defend this peculiar tenet of his see." No subject was more popular for church decoration, and Murillo showed his devotion to the dogma, and his appreciation of the popular taste, by executing upwards of twenty representations, most of them in his "vaporoso" style.

In his treatment of the divine Son he is most at home when he paints Him as the Child in His mother's arms, or as the youthful Saviour accompanied by St John. The finest of his conceptions of Christ is the "Ecce Homo," which we give in illustration. This work, which is in the Museo del Prado, Madrid, exhibits the outstanding characteristics of Murillo's style. The Face is not highly spiritual or refined, but it appeals to the heart by a certain tender sentimentality which suffuses it. The Face is not marred, but it is steeped in suffering; it does not awaken in the beholder excessive grief, but it does draw one near to the heart of all suffering. It was painted by a man who, amid the blandishments of his age, still remained devout; by one who may be fitly called the last religious painter of that great school of painters called into being by the Renaissance.

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MURILLO. Ecce Homo.

CHAPTER X

Flemish Types

"That one Face far from vanish, rather grows,
Or decomposes but to recompose,
Becomes my universe that feels and knows."—Browning.

In our search for types of the Christ Face we turn away now from the sunny lands of the South, where Art had so luxurious a growth, to the inhospitable North—the land of greyer skies and colder clime, the land of strenuous activities and serious occupations.

Of the precursors of the great era in Flemish Art little is known. The Art of Flanders as of Italy bursts into vigorous life from the quiet of the Middle Ages. In these strange and yet unexplored days artists laboured without haste and without renown. No names are written on their canvases; nobly careless of the world's praise or blame, they looked out from their cloistered retreats with quiet and unambitious eyes; and, while cruelties and outrage abounded, sat gazing into the eternal mysteries, or quietly drew upon their cloistered walls the sorrowful Face of Christ, or the lonely Mother with the meek, mysterious eyes. Denizens of a still land of their

own imagining, content to work as true craftsmen with but little reward, and to die without fame, these mystic children of a forgotten age turned from the world to seek that peace that passeth understanding, and to dream of a land of gold and azure, of saints and seraphim, which, when life was over, they prayed they might inherit. From these men and from their ways, from the thoughts they thought, and from the dreams they dreamt, from their vices even and from their virtues, we are cut off by an almost impassable gulf. They cannot come to us, and we can only with difficulty grope our way back to them. Sometimes as we stand before the pictures they painted, or walk in the cathedrals they built, a dim sense of kinship struggles for life in some hidden chamber of our heart, and then vanishes again before we have grasped it, like the forgotten chords of some old refrain. We wander about the lofty aisles, pause before the tombs they raised—the knight in his armour, the lady in her ruffles, the children kneeling around; or we wander without, our eyes resting now on the majestic masonry, now on the grotesque gargoyles, and we strive to understand those strange children of the past, but they will not reveal themselves unto us; we speak, but they will not answer; they will have nothing to do with us or our age, so silently we pass into the busy streets, humbled and amazed.

When in the fifteenth century art issued from

these patient and unambitious days and began to understand her power, Flanders had already lifted her head amongst the nations. In those lands watered by the Rhine, the Meuse, and the Scheldt, where dwelt those warlike tribes which even in Cæsar's day defied the Roman arms, civilisation had, through tumult and convulsion, slowly advanced. The ancient independence of the Germanic tribes had preserved itself through those turbulent centuries, and when at last Europe had begun to settle down to ordered government and peaceful pursuits, it was found that in those lands of forest and of flood upon which a niggard nature had refused to lavish gifts, the seed of freedom had taken deepest root. In the slow evolution of time we see the fierce warrior give place to the independent burgher, the discipline of the tribe to that of the trade guild; the mud huts of the tribal villages disappear, and in their place there arise busy cities, swarming with an industrious race who bring the same determination into commerce which their savage ancestors carried into war. Through the determined industry of these men a limit is set to the empire of the sea; the low marshes of Holland are rescued from the encroaching tides; the dismal swamps to which the ancient tribes retreated, and from which they bade defiance to their enemies, disappear; their gloomy wastes are changed into fruitful fields, intersected by water-ways along which a restless commerce urges its laden

barges. Nor content with this, these river craftsmen push their vessels out into the deep, they navigate the distant seas, and with bold enterprise carry their merchandise into every port. Flemish weavers sit at their whirling looms and with tireless fingers weave silks and cloths for the half of Europe; while at the first alarm of the bell they are out in the streets, sword in hand, ready to defend their rights and assert their independence. A brave, strenuous race were those Flemings of the fifteenth century, plain spoken and rough in their ways, caring little for ease or outward refinement, but with a healthy indignation at all wrong-doing, and a sturdy determination to be their own masters.

Such were the Flemings in the days of their prosperity, and it was only to be expected that amongst so strong a people Art would take on a national character, would strike out a line of its own, and add its own valuable contribution to the world's wealth. Nor is this expectation unrealised. Their Art lacks much of the beauty of form and face, as well as the exalted idealism of the Italians; they had neither their range of powers, nor the warm glow of their imagination; they did not seek after the ideally beautiful, and would not have appreciated it had they found it; when they attempt to make the Madonna beautiful they often make her commonplace, and the features of their saints are far from being ideally perfect. They did not care for

these things, and the effort to create them made them mere lifeless copyists of Italian types. Whenever Art took on a distinctly national character, the type immediately changed. The instinctive effort of the Flemish artist was not the realisation of ideal beauty but the delineation of character, his aim not so much beauty as truth. Honesty, untiring industry, resolute strength of purpose—these were the virtues by which their commercial supremacy had been built up, and these were the things they reverenced and admired. The cloying sweetness, the languid air, the effeminate sentimentality of saints and martyrs they could not away with; what they understood, and what appealed to them was strength, endurance, and the masculine virtues. Art in Flanders became the more national, the more it reflected this spirit; the Faces of Christ, of the Virgin, of the saints, give the impressions of portraits wrought with great fidelity but with no attempt at producing an ideal conception. Hence also it comes to pass the conception of Christ as the meek and patient Sufferer failed to attract, appeals to the emotions and sentiment did not find a ready response in the lives of those busy, matter-of-fact men of business; it is Christ the Judge, the Ruler, the King of men, which mostly appeals.

These characteristics found noble expression in the fifteenth century in the works of the brothers Van Eyck. It was given them to introduce a new era into Art, both by their artistic excellence and also

by their skill in invention. They are often called the inventors of painting in oils, but this is a mistake, as oil was in use as early as the eleventh century. What Art did owe to them was the discovery of a varnish which dried quickly, and added to the oil colours a new brilliancy. This discovery was of the greatest importance, and was universally adopted throughout Europe. Of the early work of these famous artists little is known. Art in Flanders suddenly sprang into full growth like Athene from the brain of Zeus. In the world-renowned painting, "The Adoration of the Lamb," painted by both brothers, but doubtless designed by Hubert, all the intervening and toilsome steps by which Art reaches maturity seem to have been overleaped. "In this work," says Fromentin, "Art achieved perfection in a first effort."

This great altar-piece, justly recognised as one of the great productions in the realm of Art, was ordered in 1424 for the Church of St Bavon, Ghent. It is a great and comprehensive work, illustrating the triumph of Christ and the Church, and took eight years of incessant toil to complete. Of these eight years two only were given to Hubert the elder brother, who died in 1426, and it is difficult to determine the work of each. The work is divided into two parts, and it is now accepted that the upper part is the work of Hubert. Here Christ is seated enthroned in majesty with the

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HUBERT VAN EYCK. Christ as King of Heaven.

Virgin on the one hand and the Baptist on the other. In further panels St Cecilia is represented with the angels playing on musical instruments, a piece of work beautifully rendered and constantly copied. On the extreme sides are Adam and Eve. The illustration which we have selected is the Christ of the centre panel, and the reader will not fail to realise that here we are lifted into an entirely new realm in Art. What the artist seeks after is to express not ideal beauty but majesty and strength. Christ is here the King of kings and the Lord of lords; in His hand is the sceptre of authority, for He hath put all enemies under His feet. This great conception has been thus described by Sir Martin Conway in his "Early Flemish Artists." "The figure of Christ, the King of Heaven, is one of the grandest creations of all Art, and can be paralleled only by the head of Christ in Dürer's picture of the 'Adoration of the Saints,' now in Vienna.[1] 'Here eyes do regard you from Eternity's stillness,' says Goethe. Majestic calm is the leading quality of the face. In the forehead is intellectual power; the eyes are mild, yet deep as the ocean; the hand is full of strength; the pose of the figure is greatly dignified. The word 'Sabaoth' is embroidered on the hem of His robe, the diadem of glory and the triple crown of heavenly law are upon His head; in His hand is

[1] See illustration, page 176.

the sceptre of irrefrangible command; at His feet lies the crown of earthly rule. 'Heaven is His throne, earth is His footstool.' As contrast and commentary there is embroidered again and again, on the curtain behind, the symbol of charity and self-sacrifice, the pelican nourishing her young with flesh plucked from her own breast, and beneath the name, 'Ihesus Christus.' Along the front of the dais, whereon His feet are placed, are these words written: "In His head life without death, on His forehead youth without age; joy without sorrow on His right hand, security without fear on His left.'"

The inscription placed upon this noble work states that "Hubert van Eyck, than whom none greater has appeared, began the work, which Jan his brother, in Art the second, brought to completion." Few paintings have encountered such vicissitudes as this. It narrowly escaped destruction in 1556, and again in 1641. In the freebooting expeditions of Napoleon it was captured and carried to swell the treasures of the Louvre. When in 1814, at the conclusion of peace, the captured treasures were restored, the altar-piece was sent back to St Bavon at Ghent, but so indifferent were the authorities that they stowed the panels away in a cellar. Here they were discovered by a priest, who promptly sold them, and after passing through many hands and many adventures, they were finally purchased for the Gallery of Berlin, where they now remain.

No other work has come down to us from the hand of Hubert, and his right to a place among the great rests upon this one superb piece of workmanship. But it is enough. His one conception of the Face of Christ betokens an imagination of the first order, and an artistic skill, which makes regret that this should be our only possession, deep and abiding. He was buried with great pomp in the Church of St Bavon, and over his tombstone there is written this quaint epitaph :—

"Take warning from me, ye who walk over me: I was as you are, but am now buried dead beneath you. Thus it appears that neither Art nor medicine availed me. Art, honour, wisdom, power, riches are not spared when death comes. Huibrecht van Eyck I was once named, now I am food for worms. Formerly highly honoured for painting, this all was shortly after turned to nought.

"It was in the year of the Lord 1426, on the 18th day of September, that I rendered up my soul to God, in suffering. Pray to God for me, ye who love Art, that I may attain to His sight. Flee sin, turn to the best, for you must follow me at last."

In Jan van Eyck, the younger brother, we have an artist of great originality whose works reflect with startling fidelity the national characteristics. Indeed, Flemish Art may almost be said to have been created by Jan, and the great artists who followed all bear the impress of his

genius. His characteristic limitations are perfectly obvious: he has nothing of the sublimity of his brother Hubert, as a glance at his representation of the Face of Christ will instantly show. He is supremely matter-of-fact and unemotional, and yet Jan van Eyck has been well called the greatest portraitist of all times. No artist dived with a more unerring instinct into the secrets of character than he, and none ever reproduced them on canvas with more amazing certainty. Cromwell's famous command to his painter to paint him "warts and all" would have been entirely thrown away on Jan; he never troubles himself with attempting to idealise; he paints the face line by line, feature by feature, until the man looks out from the canvas at you, startlingly alive, his whole character there in front of you.

Unlike Hubert, many works of his hands exist and are scattered over the galleries of Europe, and especially rich in its possessions is our own National Gallery. The casual visitor, as he pauses before the painting of "Jan Arnolgini and his Wife" with the superscription upon it—Jan van Eyck was here—may be inclined to smile at its apparent absurdities; but the better informed student finds it worthy of a careful examination, and is rewarded for his care. Amazing industry, and that care which a true workman who reverences his Art bestows upon the smallest details of his work, impress the beholder.

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JAN VAN EYCK. Christ as King of Kings.

Gradually, too, there dawns upon him the amazing power of the artist. The portraiture, the pose of the figures, the furniture, the very light—all bear the stamp of reality; we feel that Arnolgini and his wife and her poodle must have stood in that very room, with that very look upon their faces which Jan represents with such fidelity in this picture. But he was not a religious painter in the orthodox sense of the word. He was no mystic, had no ecstasy, no spiritual exaltation or fervour. He had nothing of the "terribilita" of Michael Angelo, or the sublimity of Raphael, or the sweetness of Correggio, or the splendour of Titian; his gifts lay in a less heroic realm. He was a painstaking and honest craftsman who hated shams, who loved truth, who had a Fleming's love of sober reality and a directness in expressing it; who never used his art to soften hard facts, and who resolutely painted things as they appeared to his frank and honest eyes. And this was the kind of Art the Flemings best understood, and which they most admired. So Van Eyck may be regarded as the forerunner of Protestantism in Art, just as the free and industrious cities of the Netherlands encouraged a manliness and independence which encouraged the growth of the Reformed movement in the succeeding century.

Two paintings of the Head of Christ by Van Eyck have come down to us—one at Bruges, painted in 1420, and a later one, now in Berlin, painted in

1438, of which we give an illustration. The Face is markedly Flemish in type, is reverent and composed, and is marked by a certain nobility, especially in the upper part of the Face, but the lines which Van Eyck drew with such faithfulness and which give such resolute character to his portraits are all here smoothed out, and a comparison suggests that this is a realm in which he is not entirely at home. He was more at his ease amongst the honest burghers of Ghent, whose strong and resolute faces he painted with such amazing sincerity.

After the Van Eycks a great galaxy of artists burst forth in the Flemish firmament, and out of so many illustrious names it is not easy to select types at once representative and supreme. From any selection, however, the name of Hans Memling could not be excluded, and his conception of the Face of Christ as shown in the next illustration is full of interest and beauty.

Hans Memling was a pupil of Roger van der Weyden, a great master and a great painter. His pupil, however, was destined to occupy a greater place in history, and to obscure somewhat the lustre of his predecessor and teacher. Of Hans Memling's early life little is known, and the blank is supplied by those kindly weavers of romance who abhor a vacuum in the history of the great, and supply the necessary details by the aid of their own fruitful imaginations. The story goes that after the Battle

of Nancy—the last fought by that resolute fighter Charles the Bold—a soldier and a fugitive arrived sorely wounded at the Hospital of St John at Bruges, and craved shelter. Here his wounds were tended, and having been nursed back to health he called for painting materials, and in gratitude for his safe keeping he covered the walls of the monastery with glowing works of Art. This story, however, like so many others which fancy has invented, has to be reluctantly abandoned. Memling was a peaceful citizen of Bruges, where he lived an industrious and uneventful life, and where he died in 1495.

In the works of this great artist we have a return to the mediæval influence, and to the old religious ideal. Hans Memling is the Fra Angelico of Flemish Art. In him, as in the Florentine saint, there is the same gentle and gracious humility. He did not live in a cloistered retreat, but he had a cloistered heart; he had the quiet eyes which look out upon the world without envy of its pleasures, and without ambition of its gains. He was one of those men who spring up even in the most material age to vindicate by their lives the supremacy of spiritual ideals and the beauty of the gentle life; who—to use the Psalmist's beautiful phrase—"seek peace and pursue it." They walk the busy streets, these gentle souls, amidst the barter and exchange; they mix each day with the busy merchants and all the restless

crowd, but their thoughts are far away; they are in the world but are not of it, they look, but do not understand, for they are the children of high degree, scorned by the worldly and the ignorant, but loved by all those whose eyes seek, and whose hearts sigh for that fair city which hath foundations, whose Builder and Maker is God. To these gentle children of the Heavenly Kingdom are revealed by the good God things that are hidden from the hearts of the "wise and prudent." These things of the gentle life it was Memling's joy to produce. He could not paint the harsh or cruel with anything like conviction, his heart was too far from them. Nor did he possess any daring originality, or express any boldness of design; he was content to borrow largely, and to reproduce the same type of feature from time to time, but he did all this with a gracious charm which commends his work to all who love the saintly and beautiful in Art. Few works possess more of this fascination than the shrine of St Ursula in Bruges. In it his love of the miraculous and supernatural found full opportunities, for the world as he looked at it was full of mystery; to his mediæval cast of mind the supernatural was more real than the actual, and the people of whom he dreamed were not those who lived amid the trials of this sorrowful world, they were denizens of a fair clime, "in which it seemeth always afternoon." So alone amongst the Flemish artists of his day he could paint Madonnas

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MEMLING. Christ surrounded by Angels.

Rischgitz.

and angels with sincerity and success, could enthrone them with dignity, and give to their faces the authentic mark of saintliness.

This illustration by Memling of Christ enthroned is the popular conception of Christ in Flemish Art. A crown is upon His head, in His left hand He holds a globe surmounted by a cross, while His right is raised to bless. He is clad in rich robes, with that adornment of jewels which is the delight of Flemish artists, and which they use to glorify their figures. Youthful angels with sweet and quiet faces stand on either side, holding a book from which they are singing, and all the colouring is rich and warm. The Face of Christ here is calm and benignant; there is that expression of peaceful victory which appealed so deeply to Memling's nature, and the whole work breathes a spirit of reverent devotion.

Memling founded no school; although he could not resist altogether the spirit of his own age, he did not in sympathy or ideals belong to it, and there was now a new spirit germinating which was to lead men in other ways, and make Memling's ideals but the shadow of a dream.

CHAPTER XII

Flemish Types—*Continued*

"The glowing portraits, fresh from life, that bring
Home to our hearts the truth from which they spring."—Byron.

Nothing is more interesting in the history of Art than to see how activity shifts from centre to centre; how when one movement is exhausted another takes its place; how each, while conserving what has been gained, adds something of its own to the enrichment of the whole.

During the early period, and throughout most of the fifteenth century, Ghent and Bruges had been the great centres of Flemish Art, connected as they were with the great names of the Van Eycks, Roger van der Weyden, and Hans Memling. But in the following century other towns rose to fame, and Art took her seat and held her court in the great city of Antwerp. Antwerp at this time, and throughout the first half of the sixteenth century, was the chief commercial city of Europe. Its government was founded upon popular rights, and its sovereign, as Marquis of Antwerp, solemnly undertook to govern according to the ancient charters

and laws. "The city," says Motley, "was the most beautiful in Europe. Placed in a plain along the bank of the Scheldt, shaped like a bent bow with the river for its string, it enclosed within its walls some of the most splendid edifices of Christendom. The world-renowned church of Notre Dame, the stately Exchange, where five thousand merchants daily congregated—prototype of all similar establishments throughout the world—the capacious mole and port . . . were all establishments which it would have been difficult to rival in any other part of the globe."

Early in the fifteenth century a fraternity of artists had enrolled themselves in the city under the patron saint of all artists—the Evangelist Luke, whom tradition declares to have been the first Christian artist. No painter of surpassing ability arose throughout the century, however, to give importance to the guild, and it was not until Quentin Matsys appeared that it began to arise out of obscurity into that splendour which, during the sixteenth century, it attained.

Quentin Matsys is one of the few men around whose life there has been hung the halo of romance who has not suffered at the hand of the latter-day critic. Born in Louvain in 1466, he began life by following his father's trade as a blacksmith, and is popularly known as the "blacksmith of Antwerp." Falling in love with the daughter of an artist, he sued in vain for her hand, the irate father scornfully de-

claring that his daughter should marry none but a painter. True love, however, knows no barriers, and Quentin immediately forsook the anvil for the palette with the happiest results. For not only did he win the hand of the lady, but he stepped almost immediately into the front rank of painters. In 1497 he joined the painters' guild in Antwerp, and in 1508 painted his masterpiece—an Entombment, executed as an altar-piece for Antwerp Cathedral, and now in the Museum of that city. Of this work Sir Joshua Reynolds says, "There are heads in this picture not exceeded by Raphael."

This sudden transition and leap into fame is hardly equalled in the realms of Art, and Matsys enjoyed fame and prosperity to the end of his life.

As an artist some of the characteristics of the blacksmith appear. There is a strength and independence about his work which is invigorating and refreshing. Conventions are flung aside by this muscular artist; his pictures are instinct with life, and are full of dramatic expression. He introduced a novelty into Flemish Art by enlarging the figures, sometimes to life size. Previously, Flemish painters had excelled as miniaturists. While the Italians filled great cathedrals with their spacious frescoes, the Flemish, owing to the dampness of their climate, were forced to paint mostly on panels. This led them to work on a small scale, but they gave to their work a minuteness and delicacy of finish which far

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QUENTIN MATSYS. Head of Christ.

Rischgitz.

excelled the Italians. "Patient continuance in well-doing," it was said, was the open secret of their success. Quentin Matsys, however, broke from this tradition; his work is freer and bolder; there is a masculine grip and energy about him which needed a wider expanse. The influence of the Italians was beginning to be felt, and though this afterwards led to unhappy results in Flemish Art, it did not in Matsys weaken the originality of his creations. From such an artist we should expect a conception of the Christ Face at once masculine and convincing, and we are not disappointed. This is a reproduction of the well-known Head of the Saviour now in the Museum in Antwerp. It is drawn with consummate skill, and is characterised by refined beauty of colour and execution. The Christ is represented here as the Saviour of the world. In the one hand He holds as sceptre a jewelled cross; the other hand is raised to bless. This is one of the finest conceptions of the Flemish School, and indeed is worthy of a high place amongst the great conceptions of the Face of Christ. There is a dignity of mien, a noble reserve about the Face, an air of kingship and command in the whole conception which inspires the heart with reverent admiration. The cast of countenance is Flemish, but there is a breadth of treatment in it which lifts it out of provincial art, and which gives it a worthy place amidst those great efforts to reach the ideal with which Art through the Christian ages

has enriched the minds of men. From all the others this may be singled out for its quiet dignity. There is a pathos in the Face, but it is refined; there is sadness, but it is repressed. The eyes look out liquid and compassionate, but there is something of the unfathomable in them as of One who would not commit Himself unto them, "for He knew what was in man." No one can gaze long and earnestly upon this work of 'Matsys without realising that here we have something nobly original, a conception which is reverent and devout, a Face which we can enshrine in our hearts.

It is difficult to associate all this with the illustration which we give of this next conception of the Face of Christ. It is, to say the least, an extraordinary production, and it is difficult for us to enter sympathetically into the mind of the artist who produced it. It is an attempt to express in its extremest form the Suffering Servant of Jehovah as described by Isaiah—"He was despised and rejected of men, a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief; and we hid as it were our faces from Him; He was despised and we esteemed Him not. . . . Surely He hath borne our griefs, and carried our sorrows; yet we did esteem Him stricken, smitten of God, and afflicted. . . . He was oppressed and He was afflicted, yet He opened not His mouth; He is brought as a lamb to the slaughter, and as a sheep before her shearers is dumb, so He openeth not His mouth." Never was abandonment of grief more realistically

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QUENTIN MATSYS. Head of Christ.

rendered: the worn and aged face, the blood-drops and the tears, the expression of exhaustion and suffering in the glazed eyes, are all expressed in a form so extreme that the cumulative effect to the modern mind is more disquieting than uplifting. We live, however, in different times. Doubtless there were even in that practical land sorrowful and laden spirits who found in this conception much that moved their hearts and wooed their affections. It is unique, however, in the Flemish art of that period, and it is hardly characteristic of the art of Memling himself. It is like an offshoot from a previous generation which heredity throws up sometimes to surprise us, and to bring to confusion all attempts too rigidly to mark out the steps of progress.

For the best part of a century after the death of Matsys no great Art appeared in Antwerp. There were painters in plenty—never so many of them—but they had deserted the shrines of their motherland for the sake of strange gods. The great strength of Flemish Art, and the secret of its inspiration, lay in its robust realism. It expressed the vigorous, freedom-loving instincts of the Northern race, and as long as it did this it commanded respect; but the influence of the Italian Renaissance began to influence Flemish artists, they began to forsake the homely realism of their national art for the blue skies and ideal conceptions of the South. This doomed them to the sterility of imitators, it robbed

them of originality, led them from spheres in which they were at ease into those for which they were totally unfitted. The blight which fell upon Italian Art after Correggio, and upon German art after Dürer, fell now upon the Art of Flanders; but whereas in Italy and Germany it never again reached the same height from which it had fallen, in Flanders its resuscitation at the end of the sixteenth century introduces us to its most glorious period, and to the greatest names in her Art history.

Peter Paul Rubens was born in 1577. In that long interval which lay between the death of Matsys and the birth of Rubens Antwerp had passed through days of darkest tribulation. The Reformation had in the interval set the minds of men on fire, had aroused the stormiest passions, and had turned Europe into a vast seething cauldron. As was to be expected, the Reformers found in the Netherlands a congenial soil for their opinions. Its lands lay near the great centre of the movement, its sturdy and industrious peoples were more highly educated than any other people in Europe, they were trained in habits of independence, they relied upon their own judgments, and were intolerant of both ecclesiastical or political bondage. The country at this time formed part of the great realm of Charles V. of Spain, and was leniently governed in his long absences by the regents appointed by him. About the middle of the century persecution broke out,

but it was not until the malign figure of Philip II. ascended the throne that the storm broke loose. Sitting like a spider within his web, sharing his secret counsels with none, this morose and threatening monarch began to spin his threads which were to hold down in hopeless bondage the peoples who owned his sway. Secretly the terrifying engine of the Inquisition was introduced and began its work of desolation; then followed the "butcher Alva," with his "Council of Blood," under whose rule every cruelty was practised and villainy licensed. Thousands were openly butchered or secretly murdered, until the realm reeked with the blood of his victims.

Antwerp, during those terrible years, suffered the extremities of misfortune. She had seen the Spanish soldiers quartered in her streets, and her best citizens daily dragged to their doom; she had suffered the terrible excesses of the "Spanish fury," when the Spanish soldiers, defying restraint, had pillaged the city, set fire to her noblest buildings, massacred her citizens, and plundered her wealth. The once proud city, a centre of European commerce, happy in the freedom of her government, the industry of her people, and the extent of her commerce, was now a heap of smouldering ashes; the heel of the tyrant was upon the neck of her citizens, her trade was paralysed, and her glory taken from her.

These were not the times for Art to flourish, and it was not until the end of the century, when peace began to be established, that artists took up the palette, and that Art in Flanders entered upon its third and greatest period with Rubens at its head. Art at this time was without a single name which could be enrolled amongst the great. Titian, the last of the great masters to survive, had died a year before Rubens was born; the period of decadence had begun in Italy and in Germany; Velasquez was not born until the end of the century; while Guido Reni, in whom Italian art showed some signs of revival, was only in his second year. There was room therefore at the top, and Rubens quickly showed that he was destined to occupy it.

Although the son of one who had been driven from Antwerp on account of his Protestantism, Rubens himself remained uninfluenced by it, or indeed by any apparent religious sentiment. He was brought up in the Spanish Netherlands, the part which remained attached to Rome, and Rubens left theology alone. He was a courtier and man of the world, a diplomatist and fine gentleman, mixing throughout his life in highest society, the friend of the rich, and the envied of the poor.

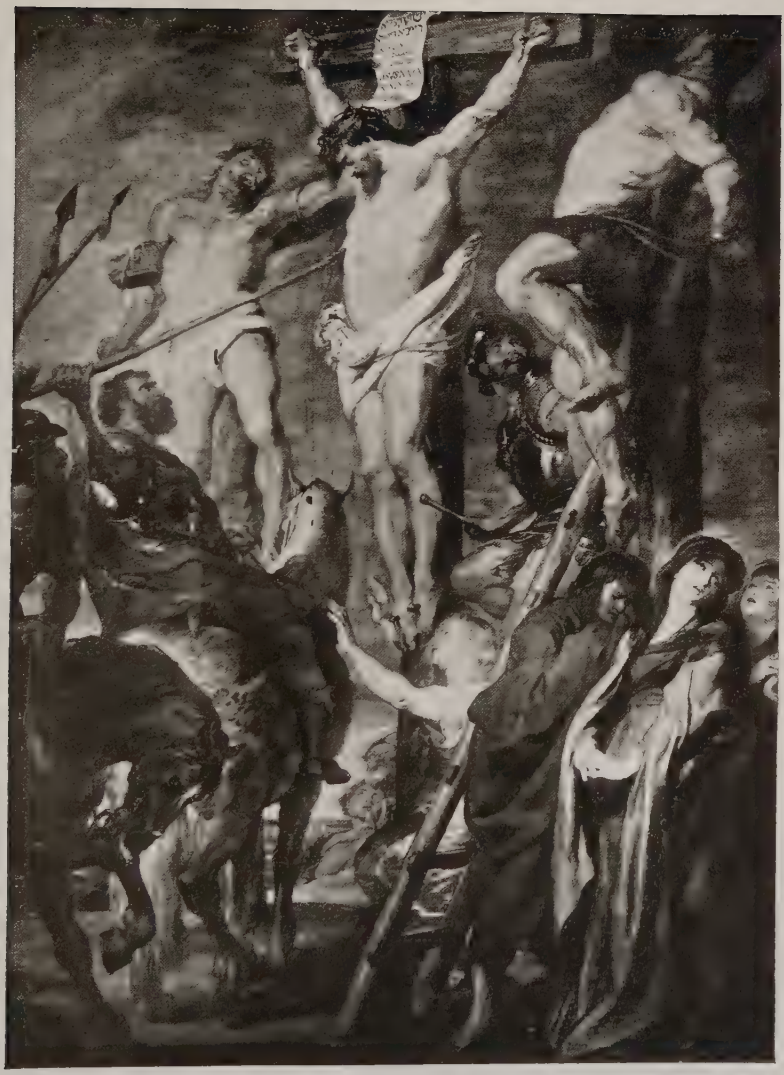
At this time the influence of the Jesuits began to be felt in Art, and, as we have seen, it was not a good influence. It was full of blandishments and bad taste, compromises and insipidity; it entered into

Rubens' style, and it increased rather than curbed the natural sensuousness of his mind.

Rubens' fame as an artist rests first of all upon his amazing creativeness and power of invention. In this respect he has no superior, hardly we should say an equal. His fecundity seems inexhaustible, and his range of effort seems to cover every conceivable realm. Portraits and landscapes, history and antiquity, biblical scenes and classic myths, village dances and courtly tournaments—all come alike to his fertile imagination; no difficulty seems to trouble him, no subject prove too intricate for his amazing inventiveness. Subjects calling for grandiose decoration, or the grouping together of masses of figures, chiefly attracted him. "I confess myself to be," he says, "by a natural instinct, better fitted to execute works of the largest size, rather than little curiosities. Every one according to his gifts; my talent is such that never yet has an undertaking, however extraordinary in size or diversity of subjects, daunted my courage." This judgment is nothing short of the truth; dauntless courage in the realm of the magnificent in art he certainly possessed.

The second great characteristic of Rubens' Art is what we may term its animalism. In everything which required the expression of animal life Rubens revelled with all his heart. He was frankly, openly, joyously sensual. No painter ever revelled more in the things of this gross and earthly life than he, or

felt more the fascination of the flesh. He had a healthy animal's ravishing delight in animal things, and these things of the carnal mind he could produce with a technical excellence and an evident enjoyment in them quite unsurpassed by any artist who ever lived. Of his technical gifts Sir Joshua Reynolds says, "He is the best workman with his tools that ever managed a pencil"; and Coleridge remarks of him, that "so long as he confines himself to space and outward figure—to the mere animal man with animal passions—he is, I may say, a god amongst painters. His Satyrs, Silenuses, lions, tigers, and dogs are godlike; but the moment he attempts anything involving or presuming the spiritual, his gods and godesses, his nymphs and heroes, become beasts, absolute, unmitigated beasts." And here we touch upon his artistic weakness. Ruskin dismisses him as being "without any clearly perceptible traces of a soul," and certainly for spiritual perception, for high and delicate feeling, for that high-born reverence for things mysterious and heavenly, Rubens is the last to whom we should turn. Gross and carnal, with a mind essentially sensual, without high sensibilities to exalt his imagination or spiritual vision to ennoble his thoughts, his works are only saved from sheer vulgarity by their marvellous technical excellence and exuberant vitality. Especially is this so when he attempted, as he constantly did, to render biblical subjects.



Page 162. *Rischgitz.*

RUBENS. The Crucifixion.

Those which attracted him were naturally those which allowed him to group together a mass of figures, and he showed his devotion to the Virgin by painting her often and always as a fat Flemish woman, unredeemed either by distinction of appearance, refinement of expression, or beauty of face.

These facts will prepare us for what we have to expect in Rubens' treatment of the Christ Face. Fra Angelico, we remember, prepared himself by prayer and holy meditation, and as he painted the Man of Sorrows his own heart was rent with sudden grief, and the picture as he painted it became blurred through his tears. When Rubens took up the brush to paint the Face of Him whom he acknowledged as the Son of God, he approached his solemn subject "without any clearly perceptible traces of a soul." His greatest work is generally recognised to be the "Descent from the Cross," in Antwerp Cathedral, and this painting has been selected as one of the twelve greatest pictures in the world. It is a terrifying production in its force and brutality. The immense pictorial power of the artist is here, the grouping is marvellous, the colouring effective, but the effect is terrifying. No painter ever depicted that awful scene with less spiritual mystery and greater disregard of Christian feeling than Rubens here. The Christ in it is dead, hopelessly, finally dead; no glimmer of the

resurrection morn lights with its tranquil rays the dreadful scene; Christian hope or feeling have no place here; the workmen handle their victim with that callousness born in men by frequent and irreverent contact with the dead, and the whole and awful tragedy is chosen to exhibit the artist's skill in grouping, and in giving to his subject dramatic effect. This picture is Art's great commentary on the words of the Apostle, "The natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God; for they are foolishness unto him: neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned."

The illustration which we give is from Rubens' famous painting of the Crucifixion, now in Antwerp Museum. In this great masterpiece both the strength and the weakness of Rubens appear. The Christ is a muscular figure, and His passiveness in death is contrasted with the awful writhings and convulsions of the thieves on either side. The Roman soldier, with brutal unconcern, pierces His side, while the women below exhibit a somewhat unconvincing grief. Spirituality apart, the picture is magnificent; in colour, in drawing, in force of expression it shows immense skill, but in all that creates the life of the soul it is fatally lacking. Of Rubens it can be said more truly than of any other:—

"This hand of yours requires
A sequester from liberty, fasting, and prayer,
Much castigation, exercise devout."

The last of the great school of artists who flourished in Antwerp is Van Dyck, a name interesting to us through his long connection with England. He was born in Antwerp in the last year of the sixteenth century, and under a lucky star. There is nothing in his life to relate of youthful genius struggling against debasing poverty, or of adverse circumstances embittering early years, or of brilliant gifts finally vanquishing the antipathies of ambitious parents. Van Dyck sailed into fame o'er a sunny and prosperous sea, amid the plaudits of friends and the encouragements of fellow-artists. As the youth showed early promise of artistic gifts, his father, who was a wealthy burgher of Antwerp, made careful provision for his training, nothing loath to see his son a member of a profession which numbered amongst its names some of the city's most illustrious citizens. We are told that Van Dyck entered upon his apprenticeship at the age of ten! Five years later he gained the much-coveted honour of entrance into the studio of Rubens, then at the very height of his powers, and it was not long before he drew upon himself the attention of the master, who showed him much kindness, and encouraged him by much sound advice. After spending some four years in the studio of

Rubens, he visited the Art centres of Europe, and, returning to Antwerp in 1628, he immediately established his right to be regarded as one of the foremost artists of his age, by his paintings of St Augustin for the Augustinian Church at Antwerp, and of the Crucifixion for the Church of St Michael at Ghent. He began to appear also as a portrait painter, and soon established for himself an unrivalled reputation.

Van Dyck's first visits to England were a disappointment to himself, as he did not meet with the success he anticipated; but in 1632 Charles I., having seen a portrait executed by him, sent an express invitation to him to come to England. This time Van Dyck had nothing to complain of as regards his reception. He was lodged by the King at Blackfriars, received knighthood in the year following, and was granted a pension of £200 for life, as well as the title of painter to His Majesty. From this time the sun never ceased to smile upon him; his success as a portrait painter was such that he could afford to live in great style; "he always went magnificently dressed, had a numerous and gallant equipage, and kept so good a table in his apartment that few princes were more visited or better served."

Van Dyck was pre-eminently the painter for his age. The Court of the unhappy King Charles was as yet unclouded by the disasters which afterwards

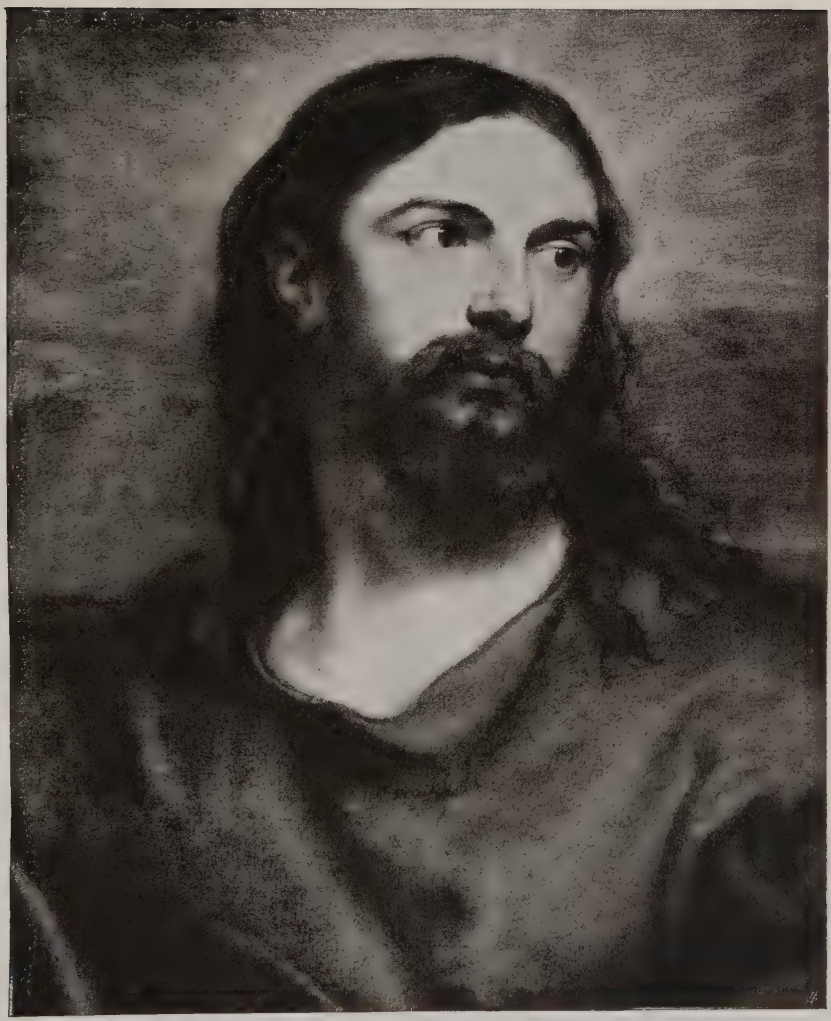
overwhelmed it; it was characterised still by its elegance of manners and splendour of costume. It was the age of gallants and grand dames, of silken dresses and pointed lace, of rich costumes and elegant manners; and Van Dyck was the man whom nature had ordained to give to such an age a brilliant setting. Elegant in manner and brilliant in speech, with that refinement which makes intercourse with high society easy and agreeable, he pursued his Art in England amid the jealous envy of his rivals and the adulation of his friends. He died in London at the early age of forty-three, and was buried in London in the old Church of St Paul. Notwithstanding his numerous retinue and his expensive tastes, he managed to leave behind a fortune of £20,000.

As an artist Van Dyck is superior to Rubens in delicacy of feeling and refinement. He was ever the courtier and the gentleman, but in lacking the coarseness which is repellent in the works of Rubens, he lacked also the masculine energy and force which are attractive in them. As a portrait painter he is supreme, and he gives to all his work a rich air of elegance and distinction. His men and women, and even his children, are all aristocrats, with their tapering fingers, their haughty bearing, and their rich costumes.

In the high realm of religious Art Van Dyck reached distinction without attaining greatness. His

character was not profound enough to give him entrance into faith's abiding mysteries; nor had his career been such as would deepen in him that hunger for, and realisation of the unseen, without which no true religious Art is possible. The absence of early struggle and the swiftness with which he reached success, the ease of his circumstances and the elegance of his surroundings, were all averse to that training of the "eye of the soul" of which Plato speaks. Only to men of the stamp of Michael Angelo, enraged at the sin and degeneracy of their age, torn by the conflicting emotions born in them by contact with both worlds, seeking the eternal things, yet conscious that they come far short of them—only to such torn and tossed souls come the great visions and the unsatisfied desires. But Van Dyck lived in no such agony; he moved agreeably amid the splendour of the courts, receiving the smiles of fair ladies and the adulation of his many admirers; and great as he is when he confines himself to reproducing the grand manners of his age, he is but an uncertain wanderer in those silent realms where men worship and pray.

Our illustration is from his painting of "Christ and the Tribute Money," now in the Palazzo Bianco, at Genoa. This subject has been always a favourite one amongst artists, and it has been the subject of some of the greatest works of Art. Masaccio, we have seen, first introduced into it an intelligent



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VAN DYCK. The Tribute Money.

Rischgitz.

portrayal of human feeling; Titian's rendering is generally regarded as the greatest of his works; both Rubens and Rembrandt put all their skill into characteristic conceptions. Like Titian, Van Dyck concentrates the whole force of his picture upon the contrasting figures of Christ and the Pharisee—upon the nobility of the one and the cunning of the other; but of the two the work of the great Venetian is superior in intellectual power, as it is superior in the technical qualities of Art. This conception of Van Dyck's, however, is full of attractiveness: the Figure is strong, the face benignant. It represents the artist at the height of his powers, and though the hand that painted it required, like Rubens, to be "sequestered," it is well worthy of a place amid beautiful types of the Christ Face.

CHAPTER XII

German Types

"Thou seemest human and divine,
The highest, holiest manhood, Thou."—Tennyson.

Art in Germany was a century later in its awakening than in Italy, and it did not come to its own until the Reformation. In the early days it was entirely religious in intention, but though the intention was good the result was indifferent; the subjects treated were far beyond the reach of the artists, who were merely weak imitators of Italian or Flemish styles. No schools arose in Germany as in Italy, giving a definite character and incentive to Art, but in various centres artists pursued their calling with more or less zeal and success. This want of originality in early German Art had its cause in the absence of those social and political conditions in which alone Art can flourish. A nation has to reach a certain height of leisure and prosperity, or it has to pass through some baptism of fire which creates a passionate national ideal, before Art becomes a dominating factor in its life. Germany, before the Reformation, however, possessed none of these

incentives; it was broken up into petty states, its peasantry was illiterate, its princes poor, its architecture uninspiring. Religious pictures were in demand, but there was neither taste nor appreciation for them; artists were wretchedly paid, and their work was poorly done. The great upheaval which was to call Germany into being came to her with the Reformation. In those formative days which preceded that great movement the German character began to find shape and expression. Amid the general collapse of society through the decay of morals, the solid virtues of the northern peoples remained like rocks in a shifting sea. Their rude integrity defied the efforts of their teachers to corrupt them; naturally less emotional, they had more independence of mind, and were less the prey of degrading superstitions. It was by no accident, but entirely in the nature of things, that the monk who was to shake Europe should have been born in the German land, and of its peasant stock, nor is it surprising that at such a time Germany should have given birth to her greatest artist.

Albert Dürer was born in Nuremburg on the 21st of May 1471, nine years before Luther. He was born into a great age—an age in which "to be young was very heaven." A great and silent revolution was taking place in the human mind. The Renaissance had liberated the intellect: the ancient treasures of antiquity had been discovered, the

writings of Greek and Roman poets and philosophers were eagerly read and discussed, a passion for learning had sprung up, and the minds of men were quickened to a new intellectual life. It was the age of eager effort, when printing presses were being set up all over Europe; when the imaginations of men were enthralled by the discoveries of Columbus and Vasco da Gama; when the discovery of gunpowder was revolutionising the art of war; when nations were being consolidated into states, and when for the first time embassies were being established at foreign courts. It was a time too when the spirit of man, expanding with the times, cried out for freedom; when hatred of the bondage which the Church had imposed took the place of submission; and when at last the forces of spiritual liberty, entering into conflict with ecclesiastical absolutism, broke the bondage for ever, and opened for the human race a new era of civil and religious freedom. Dürer lived through these days, and he was not indifferent to them. He was the friend of Luther and Melancthon, and his Art gives evidence of his Protestant sympathies. His well-known picture of the "Four Pillars of the Church" has been called the first Protestant picture ever painted. It represents the four Evangelists studying the open Bible, and its message to his age is the urgent need of studying the Word of God. This expresses the very soul of the Reformation, which appealed to the

written Word as against the visible authority, to the Christ of the Gospels as against the Christ of tradition, to the accessibility of the Throne of heavenly grace to all, as against its monopoly by Church and priesthood. It is difficult for us at this remote time to enter into all the turmoil of these splendid days, or to realise the overwhelming change which the Reformation wrought in people's minds.

When Dürer as a youth of fourteen entered into the studio of Wolgemut, a ferment of unrest was passing over Germany. The gaunt form of the plague was stalking across Europe, leaving behind her whole towns and villages depopulated; the fall of Constantinople had added the terror of a Turkish invasion to the other terrors which afflicted the minds of men. The people turned for consolation to the Church, but turned in vain, for her prelates were mighty princes, engrossed in intrigues of state, and her secular clergy were ignorant and superstitious, if not profligate and corrupt. Strange cults sprang up, such as the devotion to St Anna, the mother of the Virgin; the reverence paid to the Virgin herself enormously increased, and a passion for pilgrimages broke out. Men and women, and even bands of little children would suddenly leave their homes or occupations and set out for some famous shrine, where they vainly hoped to find peace of conscience and the forgiveness of their sins. Everywhere there was unrest: men could no

longer be satisfied with the old shibboleths. Deeper and deeper the unrest grew, while the Pope—all unconcerned—proposed his great cathedral to the memory of St Peter. At length Tetzel appeared in Saxony with his sack of indulgences, and there, confronting him, arose the broad and massive figure of the monk of Wittenburg, the dauntless Martin Luther. From that moment a new era opened in the religious life of Europe, an era which Dürer has fitly signalised as the era of the "open Book."

It is with Dürer the artist, however, that we have to do, and no one will refuse his right to a foremost place in the long catalogue of genius which the sixteenth century presents. Like many other artists of this period, he began life as a goldsmith, which was his father's occupation; but soon his talent for painting revealed itself, and he was apprenticed to Michael Wolgemut, a painter of some reputation, whose works may yet be studied with interest. After three years in the studio he added to the technical education which he received there that wider education which comes through travel. For four years he wandered about from place to place, extending his travels as far as Venice, which he again visited at a later date, and formed acquaintances amongst the great artists then at work, notably Giovanni Bellini, whom he regarded as "the best painter of them all." Those journeys, which must have added immensely to his stores of know-

ledge, fortunately left his own individuality untrammelled, and though he must have been influenced by many, he became the follower of none.

In 1497 he set up a studio in his native town of Nuremburg, and there his best work was done. Although his success was immediate, and unattended by those struggles which usually beset the path of aspiring genius, Dürer was not without his heavy trials. The first and greatest source of misery came to him when, in 1494, he led to the altar Mistress Agnes Frey. Agnes was a shrew, with a biting tongue and spiteful nature; she was quite without reverence for the delicate sensibilities of the artistic temperament, and she gave her husband many unhappy hours. The modern craze for whitewashing sinners and tarring saints has been exercised to relieve the shadows of domestic infelicity which have gathered around the home of Dürer, but the attempt to present that worthy dame as a saint maligned has hardly proved successful. There seems only too much historical ground for the assertion made by Dürer's friend and confidant Pirkheimer—"that she worried her husband into a premature death."

The second source of misery in Dürer's life was one from which artists in common, and all geniuses in particular, suffer—neglect. Nuremburg did not know the qualities of her greatest son. She treated him with scant respect, and in his letters to his

friend, Dürer contrasts with some bitterness the warmth of his reception elsewhere compared with the cold indifference with which he was treated in his native city. If neglect at home is part of the inevitable experience of prophets and artists, the genius of Dürer was generously recognised abroad. The Italians declared that he would have been the greatest of their artists had he been born in Florence or Rome. Titian was not above imitating him, and Raphael was so impressed by his genius that it is said he adorned his studio with all his drawings he could obtain. He gave a more signal proof of his admiration by sending Dürer, whom he had never met, some drawings of his own, "to show him his hand," as he quaintly puts it.

The greatness of Dürer lies in the fact that he was a thinker as well as a painter, and so takes his place beside the great figures of Leonardo da Vinci and Michael Angelo. He was too essentially a German to care for elegance, but in originality and power of invention he stands by himself. The minuteness of detail which he introduced into his paintings, especially in his treatment of the drapery of his figures and his drawing of the hair, is remarkable. It is said that Bellini, anxious to gain the secret of this remarkable fineness of touch, begged from Dürer one of his brushes, with which he painted hair. Dürer placed all the brushes he used at his disposal, but the Italian could not be con-

Page 176. *Löwy.*

DÜRER. The Trinity.

vinced that such delicate work could be accomplished with such instruments, until Dürer, taking up a brush at random, with a few swift strokes painted a lock of hair in a way which filled the Venetian artist with amazement.

Dürer was essentially a religious painter. He was himself a devout man, and he approached his work with deepest reverence. He claims also a special interest from the fact that he introduced into art a new type of the Christ Face. "The old Oriental type of Christ of which the Van Eycks, and Roger van der Weyden still made use, which Schongauer adhered to, and which is still perpetuated at Rome in the veræ effigies, displays a high, rounded forehead, arched eyebrows, and straight nose, and the lower part of the face pointed; it is expressive simply of gentleness and suffering. In Dürer, instead of this merely passive look, we have the long head of medium width, a broad, massive forehead seamed with four wrinkles, a long nose with a well-arched bridge, deep-set eyes, a broad, powerful chin, and abundant curling hair. It is an energetic German face, in brief, in all essential points it is Dürer's own countenance.[1]

The fact that Christ suffered in his stead was burned deeply into Dürer's heart, and in the sufferings of the Saviour he saw the penalty due for sin. As he drew his own features the words

[1] Thausing, vol. ii. p. 104.

were burning in his heart—"He died for me, He gave Himself for me!" "No painter," it has been said, "ever realised more fully the twofold character of the greatest event in history, the Life and Passion of our Lord. He seems to have had a special revelation, and to have accepted the divine mission of proclaiming the power of Christ in elevating the everyday life of man; and accordingly he depicted Him with all the realism of Schongauer and Wolgemut, as if He were living in Nuremburg of his own day. But more than this he grasped the idea of the redemption of man by the sufferings of Christ, and hence the marvellous conception and impressive treatment which the Passion pictures display."

The illustration which we have selected from amongst the many pictures by Dürer in which Christ appears is his well-known picture commonly called "The Trinity," now in the Belvedere, Vienna. It is a vast allegorical picture, and is regarded as one of the greatest of his works. The object of the artist is to express the joy of the heavenly host at the completed work of Christ. In the centre of the picture the Trinity is made the subject of adoration of the angelic choir; God the Father—represented, as is customary in the Art of the period, as an aged Patriarch—sits enthroned in glory, and holds forth the cross and the crucified Christ to the adoration of the faithful. Above, the Holy Ghost broods, in the form of a dove. On the

one side is a group of saints and martyrs headed by the Virgin, on the other is a group of Old Testament saints headed by the Baptist. Beneath is a large company representing the Church, and in the corner is Dürer himself, holding a tablet on which is inscribed that it was completed in 1511. This great picture reveals in a wonderful degree the qualities of Dürer's Art. The conception of Christ is full of power and kingliness, full too of reverence and spirituality. It is worthy of a place amongst the great creations of the human mind, and by many is regarded as the greatest Christ of Art.

Dürer died at the age of fifty-seven, and was buried in his native town, where his greatest work was done.

"Here, when Art was still religion, with a simple, reverent heart,
Lived and laboured Albrecht Dürer, the Evangelist of Art;
Hence in silence and in sorrow, toiling still with busy hand,
Like an emigrant he wandered, seeking for the Better Land.
Emigravit is the inscription on the tombstone where he lies;
Dead he is not—but departed —for the artist never dies."

His death drew forth expressions of profound sorrow from the great leaders of the Reformation in Germany, from Erasmus no less than from Luther and Melancthon, and it has been given to few to be so widely honoured and so deeply mourned.

The next illustration presents a very different type of conception, and was painted by a very different type of artist. Lucas Cranach was a contemporary

of Dürer's; he was born in Cranach in 1472, was an intimate friend of Luther's, and his work was more definitely Protestant. But in daring originality, in power of execution, as well as in sincerity he is not to be compared with that great master whose work we have just discussed. Although he painted by preference religious subjects, he seems to be somewhat out of his element in his attempt to portray the serious or the sublime. He is more diverting than impressive, and there is always a strange blending of the grotesque with the sublime. This is all the more characteristic, since it is unintentional, and his perfect artlessness combined with his absurd ideas of elegance tempt the art critics to treat him less seriously than he deserves. Although he cannot be treated as a great artist, he was certainly a most competent one, and in this great period of German Art stands next to Dürer and Holbein.

The illustration which we give is an intensely interesting one, and exhibits all the artist's outstanding characteristics. It is full of vivid contrasts and exaggerations. The Face of Christ is beautiful, with a certain effeminate beauty which suggests Perugino, some of whose paintings he most likely had seen. The influence of the Italian School in the central figure is no less pronounced than its entire absence in the others. The woman, whose hand the Christ takes in defending her against those who would stone her to death, is a creation

Page 180.

Brann, Clement.

CRANACH Christ and the Woman taken in Adultery.

of the artist's, who, whenever he painted a feminine type, gave her an enormous forehead and narrow oblique eyes. The angry group who stand around reveal the grotesque rusticity of Cranach's creations. The whole picture is a strange combination of elegance and rusticity, of imitation and originality, of seriousness and diversion. He seems to be in Art of that type which one often meets in life, who mean to be solemn but are often absurd, and yet who in their absurdity reveal a certain strength and originality which are impressive when they are not overlooked. The sublime and the ridiculous seem to have been inextricably mixed in Cranach, and in attempting the one there often unconsciously peeped out the other.

Cranach enjoyed during his life a popularity which is often denied to greater men. For one thing his Art was easily understood: it had nothing complex in its emotions, nothing subtle or remote in its suggestion. The element of mystery of the unfathomable, which is found so constantly in Dürer, and which is inseparable from all truly great Art, is entirely absent in Cranach. So his popularity was more immediate, but also less lasting. Time may be trusted to readjust the order of merit; and in Art, as in that higher Kingdom, it is true that "many that are first shall be last, and the last first."

The third of the great trinity of German painters is Hans Holbein, the younger, who was born in

1497—twenty-seven years after Dürer. Although so near to each other in point of time, these artists have little affinity. Dürer was the greatest of realists, Holbein the only master of the German school who leaned toward idealism. His pictures are neither touched by asceticism nor by devotion; they are full of elegance, and a feeling after beauty—a new element in German art. Although one of the greatest of portrait-painters, he added little of interest to our subject. It is as a painter of the Virgin that he excels, his Solothurn and Meyer Madonnas being great creations. Holbein travelled widely, and spent many years in England in the great days of Henry VIII. The high position he occupied in the king's estimation is illustrated by the rebuke which he administered to one of his courtiers who had insulted the painter: "You have not to do with Holbein," said he, "but with me; and I tell you that of seven peasants I can make seven lords, but not one Holbein." Holbein died in London in 1543, when the plague was raging, and is believed to have been one of its victims.

The most interesting Christ painted by Holbein is that of the "Last Supper," which was undertaken for the cathedral at Basle, in which town Holbein spent his early years, and is interesting in that it bears the marks of the troublous times then passing over Europe. Nowhere did the Reformed doctrines meet with a more enthusiastic welcome than in Switzerland, and

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HOLBEIN. Noli me Tangere.

Spooner.

the town of Basle was not behind Zurich and Geneva in its revolt against the Papacy. The Council had bowed to the storm, and had simplified the forms of worship; pictures were removed from the churches, and the worship of saints forbidden. But these concessions did not satisfy the ardent zeal of the popular faction for complete severance, so on Shrove Tuesday 1528 a riot broke out. The mob went from church to church, destroying and pillaging; tore the paintings from the walls, and effaced everything which reminded them of their past bondage. In this riot this picture suffered, being torn and defaced. It is now hung—safe from all ecclesiastical passions—in the Gallery of Basle. Unfortunately its defaced condition makes a reproduction impossible, and in order that we may not be without an illustration of his work in the realm of sacred art we have selected his "Noli me Tangere," now in Hampton Court. The picture does not show Holbein at his best, but it is full of insight, and will repay a careful study.

CHAPTER XIII

Dutch Types

"For don't you mark, we're made so that we love
First when we see them painted, things we have passed
Perhaps a hundred times, nor cared to see."—Browning.

No artist can be understood or appreciated unless set in the light of the nation to which he belongs, and the times in which he lived. Each nation has its own character, each generation its own ideals; and however universal the genius of the artist may be, he cannot escape their influence: the stamp of his nation and his age is upon him.

No greater contrast, for instance, could be offered than the Art of Holland and the Art of Italy, or than the work of Rembrandt and that of Raphael. Both were artists of consummate genius, and yet the one is characteristically Italian, while the other is no less characteristically Dutch. The one represents the ideals of Italian Art in the fifteenth century, the other those of Dutch Art in the seventeenth. To appreciate or to understand either artist would be impossible without some knowledge of the conditions under which they did their work, and the ideals by which they were influenced. This is especially

true of Dutch Art, since by its bald and often coarse realism it at first arouses repulsion in those of refined tastes, and only ceases to do so and become attractive when we enter sympathetically into the mind of the artist, into the history of the land in which he was born, and the times in which he lived. It was the absence of this historical sense which made Louis XIV. cry out in disgust when he saw some paintings by Teniers, "Take away the absurd things," and it was this same supra-refined monarch who expressed himself as "inexpressibly shocked" when he heard that Christ "spoke in the language of the common people."

The birth of Dutch Art, it must be remembered, was practically contemporaneous with the birth of Dutch political independence. Out of that series of convulsions which followed the spread of the Reformed doctrines in the Low Countries, the Dutch provinces at last emerged, Protestant in doctrine and republican in government. By both of these changes Art was profoundly affected. The elaborate ritual of the Romish Church with its appealing ceremonies, its gorgeous processions, and its sensuous worship, was banished, and in its place a form of worship was established, simple almost to baldness. Art and religion, so closely associated through so many centuries, were ruthlessly torn asunder; no longer were artists commissioned to adorn cathedral walls with the sufferings of martyrs or the happi-

ness of the blest; paintings were banished from the churches, and Art was forced to turn for inspiration to the common things of life. The absence of the pageantry of a court also still further limited the sphere in which Art could move; and thus banished from the sphere of the spiritual and the heroic, Dutch artists—in place of saints and angels—were forced to direct their efforts into new and commoner channels.

The Dutch character was, and still is, essentially matter-of-fact and unimaginative; as a race they were frugal and industrious, and essentially anti-Latin in intellect. Solid qualities took the place of romantic attachments, and the great Protestant virtues of freedom, honesty, and good government gave a breadth and wholesomeness to the life of the people. Merchant princes and well-to-do tradesmen walked down to their business in the morning with their broad beaver hats, white ruffles, and comfortable hose, transacted their business honestly and well, and at the close of the day returned home again to their solid and substantial houses where the busy "Frau" had all things well ordered and arranged. Frugality mixed with comfort, solid sense, and good cheer, were the characteristics of their homes and inmates.

Even in the best society, however, a certain coarseness of breeding was apparent. They had nothing of the grace, the delicacy, and the natural refinement of the Italians. They were a nation of shopkeepers and traders, and had little time, and

perhaps even less inclination to cultivate the gentler graces. In Dutch Art, therefore, we are often introduced into strange company: in it common life is represented with extraordinary fidelity. We see Dutch boors drinking in a tavern, heavy-limbed youths and maidens dancing on the village green, interiors of houses with kitchen utensils as the articles of decoration. Thrown thus into the arena of actual life, the Dutch artists became the great masters of portraiture and "genre"; they reduced everything to actual fact, and even the Madonna, when they painted her, became in their hands no glorified Queen of Heaven, but a very substantial Dutch matron.

The calling of the artist at first suffered somewhat severely under these conditions. Many masters had to live on scanty means; they received little remuneration and even less respect; they lived without the incentive of recognition, and died unregarded. The more shrewd of them supplemented their narrow income by following some additional employment. Thus Hobbema was a gauger in the docks at Amsterdam; Steen was a brewer; Pieter de Hooch a steward. Amid such discouragements it is marvellous that Dutch Art should have attained the great excellence which characterised it.

But for the purpose we have in view a still greater interest is attached to it. When the great schism took place which rent the Church in twain, the Art

which kept closest to the spirit of the gospels was to be found, not in Italy, nor in Spain, nor in Flanders, but in this swampy land flooded by the great waters of the Rhine and the Scheldt, and threatened each day by the stormy northern sea. In Catholic countries the Catholic revival had forced back the wheels of progress, and had drugged once again the awakening intellect. Inspired by Jesuit influence, Art became sensuous and ecstatic. In Italy it created the cloying sentimentality of the decadent period, in Flanders the sensual materialism of the school of Rubens. It was given, therefore, to the Dutch to give birth to a great artist who would re-interpret the gospel story, and give to the conception of the Face of Christ a new interpretation. "In this seventeenth century," says Léonce Bénédité, "if you wish to find the true spirit of the Gospels, you will have to go to a little Protestant country, a democratic republic in the midst of that valiant race of soldiers and merchants of the Low Countries, where, in the dark shadows of sombre alleys, along the canals and through the dense haze of sullen skies, Rembrandt's genius of light and love bursts out in all its radiance. And this time we meet with Him again: the Jesus of the Gospels, the Christ of the meek and the bairns, of the disowned and them that mourn; the Christ who delighted in the company of women and little children, who gave a welcome to the beggars and vagabonds, and who

died the death of humanity between thieves. And this Christ, born among the people and for the people, no class can claim as its own."

What now was new in this conception which Rembrandt first introduced into Art?

In the first place, Christ was approached in Art for the first time from the side of His humanity. In mediæval art, and that of the early Renaissance, Christ is conceived by artists as the august Son of God, a mystical Being who came into the world to suffer the world's woes, but who was strangely and solemnly apart from it. This theological conception of Christ is vividly expressed, for instance, in the early attempts to portray Christ as a child. With such artists as Margaritone the child who sits on his mother's lap can hardly be regarded as a child at all; nor was that intention really in the artist's mind. What was in his mind, and what he tried to represent, was a mysterious Infant born into the world, far removed in all His interests from ordinary childhood; exhibiting no interest in play, no natural hunger or thirst, no childish glee or naïve simplicity; speaking with no lisping tongue, and in no broken accents, but sitting with passive body, self-conscious of divine life, apart from the world; engaged even in infancy in the work He had been sent to perform, ever holding up His hand, and pronouncing benedictions to all who drew near to worship Him. Here Art is inspired by a theological conception. The

fact that no child could act, or sit, or look like this, or be so prematurely old, or so prematurely wise, was, to the artist, of no importance whatever. He was true to the idea which was in his mind, which was the teaching of his day, that in no way whatsoever did the Child Jesus resemble other children; that to think of His laughing, or playing, or even eating, would be derogatory to His divine nature. That Jesus was ever really and truly a child, that He increased in wisdom and stature, and in favour with God and man, the men of the Middle Ages do not seem to have believed. To them He was a divine Being, enclosed for certain mysterious purposes for a time in the form of a child, far removed from all human conceptions of childhood, ever encircled by the miraculous.

Later on, when the religious motive no longer swayed artists, this sense of mystery surrounding the nature of Christ began to disappear. The spirit of the world entered, and Art became unbelieving; nevertheless artists approached the subject of Christ from the same theological standpoint. He was still represented as the Divine Son, separate from sinners, lifted high up upon the cross, or amid the glories of the heavens. Thus, though the spiritual had disappeared, the dogma remained.

The effect of all this upon the public mind is worth noticing. Men were tempted to forget in the reverence they paid to Christ as the Divine

Son, that He was also the Son of man, with human sympathies and a human heart. In exalting His divine, they tended to lose sight of His human nature; they lifted Him so apart from sinners that sinners could not get near Him. And this explains the great hold the worship of the Virgin gained throughout the Middle Ages — it explains the position of the Virgin in Catholic teaching to-day. Humanity needs some human element to make living the faith, and give reality to the prayers of the suppliant; and as Christ had been lifted far apart, the Virgin took His place. Into her ears, full of sympathy for human woe, and to her mother's heart that had been racked and torn by pain, the sorrowful suppliants made their requests, feeling that she was nearer to them than her august Son; to her they presented their petitions, beseeching her to approach Him whom they felt they could not themselves approach, and gain a merciful answer to their requests.

When the Reformation broke up the old ecclesiastical system in Germany, it banished as gross superstition the cult of the Virgin and the saints, but it reinstated also the doctrine of the person of Christ. It brought back to theology, and to practical religion, the doctrine of Christ's humanity. It taught men to believe that Christ was the brother of men, the "Friend of the meek and the bairns, of the disowned and them that mourn." We shall now understand the importance Rembrandt has for us in the history of

religious Art; for it was given to him to be the first and the noblest interpreter of this recovered truth. Turn to the illustration which we give from his works and it will become immediately apparent that a new element has entered in. The picture may at first offend the taste which has been cultivated through the study of Italian masters, but the main thing for the present to notice is that the human side of the nature of Christ is here powerfully insisted on.

There is another characteristic, however, which now enters into religious Art, and into the conceptions of Christ by Rembrandt. Christ is here treated from the side of His poverty. The idea that Christ was poor, born of humble origin, that He lived in a peasant's home and wore humble clothing, was no doubt known, but only in that way in which a thing may be accepted and yet not believed; it certainly was no part of the belief of the people. Nor did such an idea enter into Art. The Virgin, before she was represented as the Queen of Heaven, was a great lady, clothed in garments of the richest texture, adorned with costly diadems and jewels. When the angel of the Annunciation appears to her, she is found kneeling at her prie-dieu engaged at her devotions, in a lordly mansion, surrounded with every luxury. Christ mostly shares the same social distinction. His poverty is discreetly hidden; artists delight to represent Him as an exalted Being with rich apparel and crowned magnificence. They could

not imagine Him whom they worshipped clad in the garb of poverty; the absence of rich colour, too, was artistically inconceivable; the Christ in their mind would lose in dignity and impressiveness. So even the disciples, rude fishermen though they were, had to be clothed in purple and fine linen, and given the nimbus to further exalt them. All this now disappears in the Art of Rembrandt. The nimbus vanishes, the lordly raiment disappears, the hands of the Christ are rough with human toil, His face is lined with care. No longer are His eyes lifted away from the earth and set on things heavenly and apart; they look out from the canvas with deep earnest love, full of sympathy for all the common folks, and common things of life. All the usual accessories which Art depended upon to give dignity to the person of Christ are here rejected; but, as Mr Colvin has truly remarked, Rembrandt succeeded in making as wonderful pictures out of spiritual abjectness and physical gloom, as the Italians out of spiritual exaltation and shadowless day.

Although Rembrandt brought back to Art the conception of Christ's humanity, and made Him one with the common needs of life, it must not be thought that he emptied Him of His Divinity, or was incapable of introducing into his conception of the Face of Christ that sense of mystery which, in His supreme moments, surrounded His life. Perhaps no artist has been more successful in combining the human

and the divine than Rembrandt, and to illustrate his powers at their highest we select this beautiful picture of "Christ and the Emmaus Pilgrims." This story of the Risen Christ meeting the troubled pilgrims on the way, journeying with them, and opening to them the Scriptures while their hearts "burned within them," is one of the most touching, and one of the most spiritual in the whole of the Scriptures. When we turn to Italian, and especially to Venetian artists, we find that they used it to portray the opulence of contemporary life. Carpaccio and Veronese turn the humble tenement of the pilgrims into a magnificent apartment, and load the table with costly fare. They use the incident simply as a suitable subject for the display of their talents, and introduce into it such worldly and gaudy magnificence, that everything spiritual is forgotten. Titian takes even greater liberties, since he introduces his patrons Charles V. and the Cardinal Ximenes into the scene, and shows himself entirely independent of restrictions of any kind. No subject, indeed, has been more emptied by artists of its spiritual contents than this; the beautiful and touching scene was used simply to display the luxury of contemporary Venetian life, the brilliance of its citizens, and the sumptuousness of its palaces. From these brilliant decorative canvases we turn to this simple study of Rembrandt's, and immediately we feel that we have recovered the spirit of the Gospels. For He who sits at the table

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REMBRANDT. The Supper at Emmaus.

is indeed the Christ. There is no perfection of beauty in His Face that we should desire Him, there is no elegance of form, no magnificence of dress; the table is bare, save for the bread which is in the Saviour's hands; the pilgrims are common men, but here as no other artist has ever conceived it is the scene in its deepest spiritual meaning. "Henceforth," as Fromentin has described it, "it seems hardly possible to conceive of the scene but as he has painted it. What depths of faith and adoring reverence he has suggested in the attitude of the disciple, who, his heart burning within him at his Master's words, recognises Him in the breaking of bread. He clasps his hands in worship, while his companion, unmoved as yet, leans upon the arm of his chair, his questioning gaze fixed upon the Saviour's face. How truthful, again, is the expression of ingenuous curiosity in the features of the young servant, amazed at the sudden emotion of the two disciples. But more admirable than all is the conception of the risen Christ—the mysterious radiance that beams from His pallid Face, the parted lips, the glassy eyes that have looked upon death, the divine authority that marks His bearing. By what strange magic of Art has Rembrandt been able to render things unspeakable, and to breathe into our souls the divine essence of the sacred page by means of a picture 'insignificant in appearance, without any kind of accessories or background, subdued in colour, careful, and almost awkward in handling'?"

The picture is indeed one of the great religious pictures of the world, and the Christ is no longer the possession of the Church or the ecclesiastics, of the wealthy and the exalted. He is at last the Brother of all sorrow-laden hearts, the kindly Friend, the Lover of men. Nor is He the Christ of Palestine alone, remote in time, and Jewish in sympathy; He is the Christ of Amsterdam as well, present in its streets to heal and help; the Christ of all ages and of all people.

Rembrandt's power to enter sympathetically into such a subject as this of the Emmaus pilgrims arises from the fact that he was not only a master of Art, he was also a poet and a seer. He had that rare power of penetrating into the hidden secrets of things, into the minds of men, into that inner life, and into that profound mystery of being, which is hidden from the wise and prudent and revealed unto babes. His effects are of the simplest, yet he moves us by his unerring sympathy, his unaffected pathos, by his humour too, which is perfectly spontaneous and human. He stands in Art—this Dutchman, who lived a hard and troubled life, in the rank of the highest, losing nothing by comparison with the most illustrious of the great artists of the world.

Religious Art in the Dutch School is almost solely represented by Rembrandt. The many great painters who followed him turned almost exclusively to "genre," to portraiture, and to landscape. They

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VAN DER WERFF. Ascension.

reproduced the life around them with extraordinary minuteness of detail and fidelity: kitchens and sculleries, domestic scenes and drinking bouts, village inns and rustic games are treated with a truthfulness which has never been surpassed. But religious Art found no exponent of the front rank, and it was not until the end of the great Art period that an artist appeared who sought in the gospel narrative subjects for his canvases.

In the religious pictures of Adrian van der Werff we have an expiring effort of romanticism. Instead of seeking after realism, which was the distinguishing characteristic in the Art of his precursors and contemporaries, he strove to realise the ideal, and his works seem strangely out of place amid the matter-of-fact productions of his age. His sentiment and elegance made him popular with the masses, and won for him a reputation which posterity has not endorsed. This illustration from his works is interesting as perhaps the last flickering effort of the Renaissance movement in Europe. At the close of the seventeenth century it was finally extinguished, and after tracing it through so many generations, we see it now feebly drawing its last breath. It is fitting, perhaps, that we should close it with a picture of the Ascension, since the spirit which dwelt for a season upon earth is now to leave it.

CHAPTER XIV

Early Nineteenth-Century Types

"The old order changeth, giving place to new, . . .
Lest one good custom should corrupt the world."—Tennyson.

The close of the seventeenth century saw Art everywhere reduced to impotence. Not a single painter of the first rank was left in Europe. Italian Art had received its death-blow at the hands of Caravaggio; German Art had reached its zenith with Dürer and Holbein; Rubens and Van Dyck closed the galaxy of Flemish painters, and Murillo the short-lived, but brilliant Art epoch of Spain.

When the eighteenth century dawned it saw a breaking away from tradition, and everywhere a loosening of restraint. Men had grown tired of theological disputes, and the old battle-cries fell now on dulled ears, and hearts that were heavy with lassitude. In the declining enthusiasms piety suffered; a spirit of rationalism invaded the world of thought, which, while it gave the death-blow to many an ancient superstition, infected the minds of men with a bias toward unbelief. Culture became the effort of society, and, emptied of spiritual restraints, society

became brilliant but superficial; it hid evil practices under refined titles, and practised them with the greater assiduity; with the most perfect outward deportment it countenanced the most daring profligacy. This was the century of Bolingbroke and Voltaire, of Louis XV. and Frederic II.; it was the century of deism in England, and of materialistic atheism in France.

Through all these dreary and dissolute years sacred Art had not where to lay its head; no great painter arose with a message for his day and generation; and religious Art is without a single great picture to mark the presence of a spiritual mind.

The century closed with that social upheaval in France, which, while it let loose the most terrible human passions, awoke also many of the finest instincts, and originated most of what was best in the century which was to follow. The social parasites, who had so long belittled life by their hollow frivolities, disappeared, along with the society which they had so basely entertained. When social order was once more constituted, seriousness had come back to life, purer ideals, and reverence. Men sought once again the consolations of religion and the sanctions of the Christian faith, and with the dawn of better hopes, religious Art once more lifted her head, and sought after things which were spiritual.

Great, however, were the difficulties which now confronted her. Through the years which had

intervened between the great Art period and the opening years of the nineteenth century, vital changes had passed over Europe.

In the first place Art was dethroned from its high position. Through the Renaissance period the Church had been the great supporter and patron of Art. Now this patronage was largely withdrawn. The Church was split in twain, and the one half was languid toward its interests, while the other half was actively hostile. In addition the old beliefs had no longer that hold upon men's minds which inspires great efforts. Intense movements can only be originated by intense feeling and conviction, but neither were present. The influence of Goethe was still supreme in Europe, and he upheld classical, not religious ideals. As long as the influence of that lofty Pagan was maintained, no warm religious enthusiasms were possible. A new spiritual awakening was needed.

But Art had not only to gain some new enthusiasm, it had first of all to shake off an old convention. At the close of the eighteenth century a classical reaction had set in, and for more than a generation had dominated Art. Owing largely to the discoveries made through the excavations at Pompeii and Herculaneum, the minds of artists and thinkers were once more directed to the ancient glories of Greek Art; an eager imitation set in, and everything that was not inspired by classical forms

was derided as offensive to refined taste. "Art," said Goethe, "has once for all, like the works of Homer, been written in Greek." "The sole means for us to become—ay, if possible, inimitably great," said Winckelmann, "is the imitation of the ancients." Thus applauded, the craze had to run its course, as many others have done, and many still will do. Nothing but the imitation of the antique was thought worthy of Art. Even landscape, according to Lessing, could be no fit subject for painting, because "it had no soul."

The effect of this upon religious Art can best be described by a quotation, which the artist Carstens wrote down in his note-book, as expressing a great and guiding truth. "The Art of the ancients was rich in august and captivating figures: their gods had grace, majesty, and beauty. How much meaner is the lot of the moderns! Their Art is subservient to the priests. Their characters are taken from the lowest spheres of life—men of humble descent and uncouth manners. Even their Divine Master is in painting nowhere to be seen according to a great idea; His long, smooth hair; His Jewish beard and sickly appearance would deprive the most exalted beings of any semblance of dignity. Meekness and humility, His characteristic traits, are virtues edifying in the extreme, but in no way picturesque. The lack of dignity in the subject renders it intelligible why we look so coldly at these

works in the churches and galleries. The genius of painting expends its strength in vain on Crucifixions, Holy Families, Last Suppers, and the like."

According to this standard, Christ, if He were to be considered a fit subject of Art at all, could only worthily be represented in the likeness of a Greek god; and religious Art was to find its inspiration from pagan sources. This was the gospel preached by the painters of the Classical School, and a sorry gospel it was. Before any advance could be made, artists had to free themselves from the bondage of this Greek cult, and find new sources of inspiration. Christianity had to be made a new and living thing, it had to be brought to bear upon the conscience, and awake the heart to new and living impulses. The effort to do this embraces the history of modern Art.

The first impulse came from Germany, and its chief characteristic was a revival of mediævalism. Two influences entered to direct the current in this direction. In the first place the excesses of the French Revolution had awakened the conservative instincts of Europe: men turned instinctively to the past for a basis of authority, and thought they had discovered it in the Church of the Middle Ages. In the next place Germany had passed through deep tribulation. The war of independence had wrought a new spirit in her people, and a humble heart. Distress had taught them how to pray. Thus the

one impulse led toward religion, the other toward the past. There sprang from this double impulse, therefore, that reverence for and imitation of the Church of the Middle Ages, which spread over Europe, and which has affected so deeply the religious life of our own country. What is known among us as the Oxford Movement was but part of that wider movement, the origin of which we are now considering.

In Germany the movement was ushered into public notice when the poet Schlegel openly embraced the Roman Catholic faith. In painting, it dates from the year 1810, when Overbeck, accompanied by a band of youthful enthusiasts, left his native country for Rome, where he established that school which afterwards exerted so considerable an influence upon German Art. These young artists took for their standard the advice of Lanzi, that "modern artists should study the painters of the time preceding Raphael; for Raphael, springing from these painters, is superior to them, while those who followed him have not equalled him." Instead of being called Pre-Raphaelites, however, they were termed "Nazarenes." Their whole enthusiasm was concentrated upon religious Art anterior to the Reformation, and into this they flung themselves heart and soul. "We led a true monastic life," related Overbeck, "held ourselves aloof from all, and lived only for Art. In the morning we marketed together; at mid-day we

took it in turns to cook our dinner, which was composed of nothing but a soup and a pudding, or some tasty vegetable, and was seasoned only by earnest conversation on Art."

This movement, if it did nothing more, sounded at least the death-knell of classicism. "There is one want in all recent painting," cries Overbeck, "that is heart, soul, sentiment. Let the youthful painter, then, watch before everything over his sentiments; let him allow neither an impure word on his lips, nor an impure thought in his mind. How can he guard himself from that? By religion, by study of the Bible. . . . Like those old painters, let every artist remind himself that the truest use of Art is that which leads heavenwards; its only function that of having a moral effect upon men."

Here, then, we are face to face with a new movement in Art, a movement which not only found inspiration for its Art in the pre-Reformation times, but also for its faith. The Nazarenes were at one also with the early Renaissance painters as to the function of Art—they sought to be teachers to men of the truths of Holy Religion.

The illustration which we give is from a painting by the leader and inspirer of the movement. Overbeck was a man of profound piety, and the sweetness of his disposition won for him the title of the "Apostle John." Inspired by the loftiest emotions, he regarded his Art as simply a harp of

Page 204. OVERBECK. Christ and Barabbas. (*By permission of Messrs Henry Graves.*)

David for the praise of the Lord, and his one hope was "that through his works one soul might be strengthened in faith and piety." This to him was far greater reward than any earthly fame. His work, when we turn to it, reveals the qualities of his gentle character; it is full of refinement and spirituality; though lacking in originality, it has a certain exaltation and purity about it which awakens in the onlooker a distant memory of better days. Christ is standing here on the steps of the Temple, exhibited by Pilate for the pity of the people. Beneath is the shouting mob who will have none of Him, but cry out for the release of Barabbas who is being brought in from the other side, and whose action is meant by the artist to suggest riotous effrontery. The Christ stands with meek face and bowed head, the picture of gentle submission. This is just such a picture as a saintly youth would paint; though it is not a great conception, the stamp of love is upon it, and love can touch nothing without beautifying it.

Deeply interesting as this conception is as an illustration of a new awakening in the sphere of religious Art, the movement begun by the Nazarenes passed away without leaving any very pronounced impression behind it. For one thing, it added nothing new to Art. The Nazarenes, like the School of Bologna, were eclectics; and while the Germans surpassed the Italians in sincerity, they were far

beneath them in technical skill. Overbeck and his followers show undoubtedly an artistic advance over their predecessors, but all that had been effected was a change of masters. The one school found inspiration in the Greeks, the other in the early Italians; but neither found inspiration in themselves, in their own times. It is necessary for all great Art epochs that the young men should see visions, and the old men dream dreams; necessary that the future should inspire them, not the past. Imitation, however sincere, of masters, however illustrious, can never found anything inspiring, or make any permanent contribution either to religious Art or to any other form of it. "Who walks behind another," said Michael Angelo, "can never pass him by."

No great movement in sacred Art has since arisen on the Continent, and it is not until we reach the Pre-Raphaelites that greatness and spirituality are found in the treatment of religious subjects. French artists especially, great in other departments, are in this pitifully lacking. Nevertheless, though no great movement has arisen, many individual artists have turned to the Gospels, and with greater or less merit have sought to give spiritual conceptions of the Face of Christ. Especially was this so when the Romantic movement, which set in on the decay of classicism, introduced a certain warmth of sentiment into Art. An emotional school of painters then arose, many of

whom turned to or were attracted by the pathos of the Christ life, and who, moved by sheer emotionalism, chose as their theme subjects from the Gospels. Their work, as was to be expected from this slender source of inspiration, lacks spirituality, and though pleasing and pretty, is often mawkish and often anæmic.

The most popular name in this school, and its most capable representative, is Ary Scheffer, who about the middle of the nineteenth century won a great reputation as a painter of sacred subjects, a reputation, however, which has not been sustained. Time deals harshly with many whom their own generation delighted to honour, and many paintings of scriptural scenes which are carried about the country and exhibited to admiring crowds, will in a few years be safely hung on the walls of oblivion.

Scheffer, though he has been called the "poet painter of France," was German-Dutch by birth. Trained in the Classical School, he came early in life under the influence of the Romantic movement, and in his work both influences are apparent. This, as it has been pointed out, was what made him popular with his contemporaries, who hailed his compromise between the schools as the attainment of the highest Art. In form his figures remain classical, but in face and in expression they are ideal and sentimental. Melancholic in temperament, he delights in subjects which are tearful or contemplative. Thus when he

turned to the Gospels and to the Life of Christ, he naturally selected those incidents which appeal to the emotions. He lingers around the Passion, and his Christ is ever passive or sorrowful. Even when he turns to subjects which demand a more resolute demeanour, he cannot escape from the sentimental side of his nature. His figures suggest exhaustion and physical languor.

These characteristics of his style will be readily detected in this accompanying illustration. The Face and form possess physical beauty; the sadness appeals to the heart; the memory of all that He endured for sinful men is worthily suggested; but the "strength in weakness which we sigh for" is not here. The reed is held in nerveless hands; there is nothing of that divine victory which for the joy that was set before Him enabled Him to endure the Cross, and march with Kingly steps up the steep ascent of Calvary. Here the Christ is pale and wan; there is calm in His Face, but it is the calmness of resignation, not of conscious triumph. There is nothing of that tremendous consciousness of immortality which made Him exclaim that "though heaven and earth should pass away, His word would never pass away"; that neither suffering, nor death, nor anything which the hate of man could devise, could ever separate Him from those whom He loved. This is what we look for in Art, and look for in vain. Beautiful and pleasing conceptions there are

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ARY SCHEFFER. Ecce Homo.

innumerable ; conceptions which, were beauty of line, or softness and harmony of colour, what we most desire, would fulfil every expectation. But when to tenderness we seek strength, with resignation that sublime consciousness of victory, we turn away from such paintings, feeling that beautiful and appealing though they be, they are not the Christ of Nazareth nor of Jerusalem, nor are they the Christ whom we seek.

In the sculpture of this period the name which attained the widest celebrity is that of Thorwaldsen, and his most famous and popular work is his Christ, which, surrounded by the Apostles, stands in the Frauen Kirche, in Copenhagen.

Thorwaldsen was born in Copenhagen in 1770, of humble origin, his father being a wood-carver, who earned a precarious living by carving heads and figures for ships. The son followed for a while his father's employment, and this influence of his early apprenticeship betrays itself in a certain stiffness and awkwardness of outline which he never succeeded in throwing off. At the early age of eleven he entered as a free student into the Academy of Arts in Copenhagen, and after various youthful successes he set out for Rome, where a new world opened out for him. "I was born on the eighth day of March 1797," he says; "before that time I did not exist." These were the days when the classic revival was in full flood, when it was believed

that "the Greeks were always right," and of that revival Thorwaldsen became the most popular exponent, and the most vehement defender. This long worship of the Greek spirit made him a pagan in sentiment, and wrought in him an indifference to all creeds. His object in his figure of the Christ is not to produce the lowly One of Nazareth whom men worship as Saviour and follow as Friend, but to produce in the figure of Christ the highest realisation of masculine strength and beauty. When asked how he, who was indifferent to religion, could expect to succeed in Christian Art, he replied, "Have I not modelled the gods of Greece, and yet do not believe in them?" an answer which betrays the limitations of his mind as well as the limitations of his Art. To reveal the Christ one must possess the Christ, and not all the Greek spirit which he possessed could make up for this "one thing lacking."

The following information has been given by his biographer as to pose and character of the figure. "Thorwaldsen's Christ is scarcely less carefully thought out than Leonardo da Vinci's Christ in the Last Supper. Like the youthful Christ of Holman Hunt's 'Finding of Jesus in the Temple,' it was studied at first without drapery, and yet the action which would be admitted to be fine and felicitous, flashed upon the artist in a moment. It is related that on a certain day, as Thorwaldsen was leaving his studio with a friend, he suddenly arrested his steps, placed himself in

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THORWALDSEN. The Christ.

front of his figure of Christ, and there remained without uttering a word. One arm as modelled in the clay was raised, the other extended. Suddenly the artist advanced with a firm step, as when a person has come to a strong resolve. Thorwaldsen seized the two arms, and by an energetic movement brought down both equally; he then retraced his steps, and exclaimed: "See, that is my Christ; there it is; and so it will remain.'"

The pose is strikingly effective, and the whole figure commanding and impressive; and though it lacks the highest gifts, it is yet free from the puerilities which at this time characterise so many of the conceptions of the Christ.

CHAPTER XV

Pre-Raphaelite Types

"I am among you as one that serveth."
"I am the light of the world."

Art in England in the middle of the nineteenth century had sunk to a very low ebb. In 1822 Constable had prophesied that in thirty years there would be no genuine painting left in England. This prophecy, unfortunately, had been fulfilled. When, in 1847, Holman Hunt—then a youth of twenty—sought for a master to guide him in his studies, he sought, he tells us, in vain. "The greater number of painters were trite and affected; their most frequent offence in my eyes was the substitution of inane prettiness for beauty, and the want of vigorous health in the type of it. Pictured waxworks playing the part of human beings provoked me, and hackneyed conventionality often turned me from masters whose powers I valued otherwise. What I sought was the power of undying appeal to the hearts of living men. Much of the favourite Art left the inner self untouched."

This criticism has been on the whole endorsed by

the public. Art had become frigid and artificial. The Dresden-china school was supreme: there were the inevitable shepherd and shepherdess dancing on the green; the country swains with their round faces and round eyes; the parlour interiors, with the family all seated in their artificial postures, very self-conscious, and rigged out in their Sunday clothes. Suddenly the mysterious letters P.R.B. began to appear on the works of a few young enthusiasts, and immediately the whole Art world was plunged into a panic. Like all great movements, it was received first with mockery, then with envy, and then with praise. When men were able to estimate its influence disinterestedly, it was acknowledged that it had originated a new epoch in Art, and was a genuinely inspired movement.

The Pre-Raphaelite movement in England has often been compared with the Nazarene movement in Germany, but the two have little or no affinity. The movement originated by Overbeck represented a Catholic revival in Art. Those who followed him to Rome became devotees of the Romish Church, donned monastic robes, and had as their one ambition the imitation of the early ascetic painters. As a mere revival of the past, and an imitation of dead masters, however sincere that imitation was, no great movement could be expected from it. The Pre-Raphaelite movement was essentially a movement toward liberty; it was a revolt against tradi-

tion, a daring effort to gain complete emancipation from the trammels of the past; its leaders sought to fling aside every constraint which would hinder them from reaching out to a fresh and independent study of Nature. They were Pre-Raphaelites in the sense that they believed that artificiality entered into Art with Raphael, and they sought that freedom from restraint which was possessed by the painters who preceded him. Their aims have been concisely stated by Mr Michael Rossetti, and they were as follows:—

I. To have genuine ideas to express;

II. To study nature attentively, so as to know how to express them;

III. To sympathise with what is direct, and serious, and heartfelt in previous Art, to the exclusion of what is conventional, and self-parading, and learned by rote; and

IV. Most indispensable of all, to produce thoroughly good pictures and statues.

The first illustration which we give is from the works of one who was not a member of the Brotherhood, but an inspirer of those who originated it. Whether he was ever asked to become a member or not it is difficult to determine, and is of little importance. "I never would have to do with societies," he says; "they're bound to end in cliquishness; besides, I was a good deal older than they." The main fact of importance is that the

three original members, Holman Hunt, Millais, and Rossetti, all acknowledge the profound influence the work of Madox Brown exerted in shaping their minds and determining the character of the movement.

Madox Brown was born in 1821, and spent his youth on the Continent, in Antwerp, in Paris, and in Rome. Influenced in turn by all these different schools, he finally threw them all aside, and developed his own striking individuality of style. When only twenty, he conceived the idea of lighting up his pictures realistically, instead of reproducing the artificial studio lighting then in vogue, a discovery which was destined to produce a profound effect in British Art. He flung aside all academic rules, tried to render the subject he was painting absolutely without regard to the Art of any period or country, his one watchword being Truth. Caring nothing for honour, he lived a laborious life, evaded rather than courted public recognition, and was thus largely unrecognised by the public and the press. Some two years before his death, however, he was the subject of a unique testimonial. A number of artists and public men, realising that he had never received worthy public recognition, subscribed the sum of £900, and commissioned him to paint a picture to be gifted to the nation, which should be a memorial of his genius. The work, however, which he undertook was never finished. He is represented in the Tate Gallery by the remarkable

picture, "Christ washing Peter's Feet," from which our illustration is taken.

Of this work Madox Brown has himself given a description, which is as follows:—

"St John tells us that Jesus, rising from supper, 'laid aside His garments,' perhaps to give more impressiveness to the lesson of humility, 'and took a towel, and girded Himself,' poured water into a basin (in the East, usually of copper or brass), 'and began to wash the disciples' feet, and to wipe them with the towel wherewith He was girded.' Then Peter said, 'Lord, dost Thou wash my feet?' The purposely assumed humility of Jesus at this moment, and the intense veneration implied in the words of Peter, I have endeavoured to render in the composition. The very simple traditional costume of Jesus and His disciples, which seems, moreover, warranted by modern research, as also the traditional youthfulness of St John, curly grey hair of Peter, and red hair of Judas, which I should be loathe to disturb without having more than my own notion to give in lieu, I have retained—combined with such truth of surroundings and accessories as I thought most conducive to general truth, always intending, however, in this picture the documentary and historic to be subordinate to the supernatural and Christianic—wherefore I have retained the nimbus. This, however, every one who has considered the subject must understand, appeals *out* of the picture to the

Page 216. MADOX BROWN. Christ washing the Disciples' Feet. *Rischgitz.*

beholder, not to the other characters in the picture. Judas Iscariot is represented lacing up his sandals after his feet have been washed."

The picture has a historic interest from the fact that the portraits are mostly taken from members of the Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood, the head of Christ being a literal transcript of Mr. F. G. Stephens. Its outstanding feature as a work of sacred Art is its sincerity. The object in the artist's mind was not to use a sacred subject to display his Art, but to use his Art in giving a spiritual interpretation of a sacred subject. There is all the difference in the world between those two things, and the want of the right intention is at the root of all irreverence in Art. The picture itself may not please at first, for it lacks that sumptuousness which from the time of Raphael had become the convention in sacred Art, but the rightness of its aim, at least, cannot be mistaken. Truth, touched with emotion, is the inspiring motive in the painter's mind; he seeks to produce not a piece of decoration, but a living and moving scene in the life of Christ as it appears to his mind, and as such the work is a great contribution to sacred Art. Though animated by a noble realism, the scene is not rendered with that minute attention to details which was the characteristic of Pre-Raphaelitism. It was painted early in the artist's life, and was continually altered by him. The colouring is now

richer and more harmonious than in the early efforts.

Madox Brown is one of those artists who only slowly come to their own, and coming generations are likely to hold him in nobler esteem than did his own; nor is the testimony given of him undeserved, that as an artist he has "pierced to the heart of deep emotions, and conceived for us the very aspect of great deeds."

Of the three chief members of the Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood, which was the greatest artist it would be difficult to determine, each possessing supreme genius, and each differing from the other; but in the realm of sacred Art Holman Hunt stands without a rival. His name must be classed amongst the great religious painters of all time. He brought to bear upon the gospel narrative not only a rich imagination and supreme artistic gifts, but also a deeply reverent and devout mind. To him, Ruskin says "the story of the New Testament, when once his mind entirely fastened upon it, became what it was to an old Puritan, or an old Catholic of true blood —not merely a reality, not merely the greatest of realities, but the only reality."

There is no difficulty in selecting from the works of this great artist that conception of the Face of Christ most worthy of a place in such a volume as this. His picture of "Christ as the Light of the World" has produced a greater impression

upon the public mind than any painting of modern times.

In a conversation with Millais, who happened to see the first sketch, he explained his motive. "There is a text in Revelation," he said, "'Behold, I stand at the door and knock.' Nothing is said about the night, but I wish to accentuate the point of its meaning by making it the time of darkness; and that brings us to the need of a lantern in Christ's hand, He being the bearer of the light to the sinner within, if he will awaken. I shall have a door choked up with weeds, to show that it has not been opened for a long time, and in the background there will be an orchard."

In his "Pre-Raphaelitism and the Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood," he gives a more detailed account of the meaning of the picture. "I may say," he writes, "that any occult meaning in the details of my design was not based upon ecclesiastical or archaic symbolism, but derived from obvious reflectiveness. . . . The closed door was the obstinately shut mind; the weeds the cumber of daily neglect, the accumulated hindrances of sloth; the orchard the garden of delectable fruit for the dainty feast of the soul. The music of the still small voice was the summons to the sluggard to awaken and become a zealous labourer under the Divine Master; the bat flitting about only in the darkness was a natural symbol of ignorance; the kingly and priestly

dress of Christ, the sign of His reign over the body and soul, to them who could give their allegiance to Him, and acknowledge God's overrule. In making it a night scene, lit mainly by the lantern carried by Christ, I had followed metaphorical explanation in the Psalms, "Thy word is a lamp unto my feet, and a light unto my path," with also the accordant allusions by St Paul to the sleeping soul, "The night is far spent, the day is at hand."

The carefulness with which the whole scene is thought out is only equalled by the extraordinary minuteness and fidelity of the work. In order to gain the true effects, the artist painted the picture on moonlight nights. He had a little sentry-box rigged up for his protection, and sat with his feet in a sack of straw. It was then late autumn, and the nights were chilly; his only illumination was a common candle. As long as the moon availed, he wrought from 9 P.M. until 5 A.M., retiring to rest until 10, and then returning to rectify any faults of colour, and to prepare the work for the ensuing night.

Before it was exhibited, and when on the easel in his studio in London, the artist tells us he was honoured by a visit from Carlyle and his wife. His "harangue," as Hunt calls it, is so delightfully characteristic that we need offer no apology for quoting it here.

"You call that thing, I ween, a picture of Jesus Christ," he cried. "Now you cannot gain any profit

to yourself, except in mere pecuniary sense, or profit any one else on earth, in putting into shape a mere papistical fantasy like that, for it can only be an inanity, or a delusion to every one that may look on it. It is a poor misshaped presentation of the noblest, the brotherliest, and the most heroic-minded Being that ever walked God's earth. Do you ever suppose that Jesus walked about bedizened in priestly robes and a crown, and with yon jewels on His breast, and a gilt aureole round His head? Ne'er crown nor pontifical robe did the world e'er give to such as Him. Well—and if you mean to represent Him as the spiritual Christ, you have chosen the form in which he has been travestied from the beginning by worldings who have recorded their own ambitions as His, repeating Judas' betrayal to the high priests. You should think frankly of His antique heroic soul; if you realised His character at all you would not try to make people go back and worship the image the priests have invented of Him, to keep men's silly souls in meshes of slavery and darkness. Don't you see that you're helping to make people believe what you know to be false, what y' don't believe yourself?" Here the artist declared that he did firmly believe in the idea that he had painted, more than anything he saw with his natural eyes, and that he could prove from his writings that Carlyle did also. But Carlyle would have nothing of it; raising his voice, he cried, "It's a'

wilful blindness; ye persuade yourself that ye do believe, but it's high time that ye gave up the habit of deluding yourself." Again the artist tried to explain, but it was totally unavailing. "I have seen the pictures," he went on, "all of them by the great painters who have set themselves to portray Jesus, and what could be more wide of the mark? There's the picture of 'Christ disputing with the Doctors,' in our National Gallery,[1] by Leonardo da Vinci, and it makes Him a puir, weak, girl-faced nonentity, bedecked in a fine silken sort of gown, with precious gems bordering the whole, just as though He had been the darling of a Court, with hands and fingers that have never done any work, and could do none whatever, a creature altogether incapable of convincing any novice advanced enough to solve the simplest problem in logic. There are other notable conceptions of Christ in paint and marble familiar to us in prints, and they are all alike." Here raising his voice very high, he continued, "And when I look, I say, 'Thank you, Mr Da Vinci,' 'Thank you, Mr Michael Angelo,' 'Thank you, Mr Raphael; that may be your idea of Jesus Christ, but I've another of my own which I very much prefer.' I see the Man toiling along in the hot sun, at times in the cold wind, going long stages, tired, hungry often, and footsore, drinking at the spring, eating by the way, His rough and patched

[1] This picture is now attributed to Luini. See page 58.

clothes bedraggled and covered with dust, imparting blessings to others which no human power, be it king's, or emperor's, or priest's, was strong enough to give to Him, a missioner of Heaven sent with brave tongue to utter doom on the babbling world and its godless nonsense. . . . Surrounded by His little band of almost unteachable poor friends, I see Him dispirited, dejected, and at times broken down in hope by the immovability and spleen of fools, who being rich in armed slaves, determined to make the heavens bend to them. I see Him, unflinching in faith and spirit, crying out, 'He that hath ears to hear, let him hear.' This was a man worth seeing the likeness of, if such could be found."

The "Light of the World" appeared in the Academy in 1854, and was immediately met by a storm of contemptuous criticism, from the *Times* down to the *Family Herald.* The *Athenæum* was conspicuously frank and illuminating. The conception of the Christ, it informed its readers, "expresses such a strange mingling of disgust, fear, and imbecility, that we turn from it to relieve the sight." This is characteristic of the Art criticism, if such a term can be used in this connection, which the Pre-Raphaelites had to endure, until at last Ruskin unsheathed his sword and straightway laid the critics in the dust. Taking up the criticism of the *Times*, and replying to it, Ruskin gives the following impression which the picture produced upon his mind:—

"Standing by Holman Hunt's picture, 'The Light of the World,' yesterday for upwards of an hour, I watched the effect it produced upon the passers-by. Few stopped to look at it, and those who did almost invariably with some contemptuous expression, founded on what appeared to them the absurdity of representing the Saviour with a lantern in His hand. Now, it ought to be remembered that, whatever may be the faults of the Pre-Raphaelite picture, it must at least have taken much time; and therefore it may not unwarrantably be presumed that conceptions which are to be laboriously realised are not adopted in the first instance without reflection. So that the spectator may surely question with himself whether the objections which now strike every one in a moment might not possibly have occurred to the painter himself, either during the term devoted to the design of the picture, or the months of labour required for its execution; and whether, therefore, there may not be some reason for his persistence in such an idea, not discoverable at the first glance.

"Mr Hunt has never explained his work to me. I give what appears to me its palpable interpretation.

"The legend beneath it is the beautiful verse:—'Behold, I stand at the door and knock. If any man hear My voice, and open the door, I will come in to him, and will sup with him, and he with Me,' Rev. iii. 20. On the left-hand side of the picture is seen this door of the human soul. It is fast barred:

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HOLMAN HUNT. Light of the World.

(*By permission of the Autotype Co., New Oxford Street.*)

its bars and nails are rusty; it is knitted and bound to its stanchions by creeping tendrils of ivy, showing that it has never been opened. A bat hovers about it; its threshold is overgrown with brambles, nettles, and fruitless corn,—the wild grass 'whereof the mower filleth not his hand, nor he that bindeth the sheaves his bosom.' Christ approaches in the night time,—Christ in His everlasting offices, of prophet, priest, and king. He wears the white robe, representing the power of the Spirit upon Him; the jewelled robe and breastplate, representing the sacerdotal investiture; the rayed crown of gold, inwoven with the crown of thorns—not dead thorns, but now bearing soft leaves, for the healing of the nations.

"Now, when Christ enters into any human heart, He bears with Him a twofold light: first, the light of conscience, which displays past sin, and afterwards the light of peace, the hope of salvation. The lantern carried in Christ's left hand is this light of conscience. Its fire is red and fierce; it falls only on the closed door, on the weeds which encumber it, and on an apple shaken from one of the trees of the orchard, thus marking that the entire awakening of the conscience is not merely to committed, but to hereditary guilt.

"The light is suspended by a chain, wrapt about the wrist of the figure, showing that the light which reveals sin appears to the sinner also to chain the hand of Christ.

"The light which proceeded from the head of the figure, on the contrary, is that of the hope of salvation; it springs from the crown of thorns, and, though itself sad, subdued, and full of softness, is yet so powerful that it entirely melts into the glow of it the forms of the leaves and boughs which it crosses, showing that every earthly object must be hidden by this light, where its sphere extends.

"I believe there are very few persons on whom the picture, thus justly understood, will not produce a deep impression. For my own part, I think it one of the noblest works of sacred Art ever produced in this or any other age."

The judgment of the half century which has followed since these words were written has certified their truth.

Of the members of the Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood the one who possessed the greatest natural genius was Dante Gabriel Rossetti. He also has attained the widest celebrity, and this as much through the romance and pathos of his life as through the greatness of his artistic triumphs. Far beneath Millais in technical facility, and Holman Hunt in patient continuance in well-doing, he soared above both in the splendour of his imagination, and in the exotic fertility of his creative genius. Both Millais and Hunt were essentially English in their sanity and wholesomeness, but Rossetti betrayed in all he was and did the Italian blood which coursed

through his veins. "Rossetti," says Ruskin very truly, "was not an Englishman, he was a great Italian tormented in the Inferno of London."

Although he may not have been, as was claimed, the originator of the Pre-Raphaelite movement—Holman Hunt declares it to have been Millais and himself—yet there can be no doubt that it was his volcanic temperament and radiant personality which gave it momentum and directed its impulse. After a few years, he fell away from its original purpose into a realm of his own, and in that realm he remained victor and lord. His mind was like a garden of the East, a blaze of colour, of rich exotic plants, of vast and tangled growths, incapable of restraint, riotous in excess. What he in his strange life longed for, and craved for, and rent himself to reach, was beauty, a beauty sensuous, but mysterious and elusive, which he sought for but could not grasp, which he longed for but could not attain, which in moments of ecstasy he saw as from afar, and which, once having seen—like those who in the legend of old saw the mystic vision—unfitted him from walking any more with placid steps amongst the common things of life.

Of his strange life and strange character, and all the influence he wrought on Art; of his temperament and complex personality, there need nothing be written here: what we have to do with is his contribution to sacred Art and his conception of the Face of Christ.

Rossetti had all the endowments necessary, except that of a warm personal faith, to make him one of the greatest of religious painters. He was brought up amid surroundings which were spiritual and refined; his sisters were both nobly devout; he himself possessed in his nature that vivid imagination united with dreamy mysticism of which seers and devotees are made. He was a poet and a visionary, and his mind was haunted ever by dreams and visions of the past.

In his early Pre-Raphaelite days it seemed as if the spiritual side of his complex nature were to gain the victory. His first effort was a painting of the "Girlhood of Mary Virgin," a work of austere simplicity, yet of spiritual charm; his second was "Ecce Ancilla Domini," a "harmony of white upon white of indescribable graciousness and delicacy."

After this the exotic element in his nature began to assert itself: instead of worshipping the Christ, his heart craved and cried out for Beauty. He turned away from simplicity and the holy life to paint female forms and faces of enchanting loveliness. He created a type of female beauty all his own, which he saved from utter sensuousness by giving to their eyes a haunting mystery, a spiritual dolor, a complex and mystic charm which has no parallel in all the history of Art.

His "Mary Magdalene at the House of Simon," from which this illustration[1] is taken, belongs to this

[1] See Frontispiece

transition period, when he had not yet parted from the old, and had not yet taken on the new. The following is Rossetti's own description of the picture, which was begun in 1853:—

"The scene represents two houses opposite each other, one of which is that of Simon the Pharisee, where Christ, with Simon and other guests, is seated at the table. In the opposite house a great banquet is held, and feasters are trooping to it dressed in cloth of gold, and crowned with flowers. The musicians play at the door, and each couple kiss as they enter. Mary Magdalene has been in the procession, but has suddenly turned aside at the sight of Christ, and is pressing forward up the steps of Simon's house, and is casting the roses from her hair. Her lover and a woman have followed her out of the procession, and are laughingly trying to turn her back. The woman bars the door with her arm. Those nearest the Magdalene in the group of feasters have stopped short in wonder, and are looking after her, while a beggar girl offers them flowers from a basket. A girl near the front of the procession has caught sight of Mary, and waves her garland to turn her back. Beyond this, the narrow street abuts on the high-road and the river. The young girl seated on the steps is a little beggar who has her food given her from within the house, and is wondering to see Mary go in there, knowing her as a famous woman in the city. Simon looks disdainfully at her,

and the servant, who is setting a dish on the table, smiles, knowing her too. Christ looks towards her from within, waiting until she shall reach Him."

The incident Rossetti has described in one of the most beautiful of his sonnets, which shows how profoundly it affected his mind and imagination. Held back by her lover, Mary tears herself free, and cries:—

> "O loose me! Seest thou not my Bridegroom's face
> That draws me to Him? for His feet my kiss,
> My hair, my tears, He craves to-day: and oh!
> What words can tell what other day and place
> Shall see me clasp those blood-stained feet of His?
> He needs me, calls me, loves me: let me go!"

The aim of the artist here is to produce on the Face of Christ those complex emotions of shame as He sees the sinful woman, and that intense compassion which drew her like a magnet to His feet, and made her pour out her soul in an agony of repentance. This is beautifully and reverently done, and seen thus separated from the picture, it gains additional force. In the painting itself the attention is drawn to the Magdalene, who becomes the dominating figure, and her sudden repentance the theme, rather than that of the spiritual fascination of Christ. This fact, and the picture itself, shows the influences operating at this time in the mind of the artist himself. He is mainly attracted by the figure of the Magdalene, and the first suggestion of that type of

beauty which he afterwards revelled in, begins to shape itself here for the first time.

The attempt to produce a conventional likeness of Christ is here, it will be seen, as also in the picture by Madox Brown, abandoned. The face is a likeness of the late Sir Edward Burne-Jones, who sat as a model.

The concluding scene of this touching and beautiful narrative has been nobly described in a sonnet by Hartley Coleridge :—

> "She sat and wept beside His feet; the weight
> Of sin oppressed her heart; for all the blame
> And the poor malice of her worldly shame,
> To her was past, extinct, and out of date;—
> Only the sin remained!—the leprous state;
> She would be melted by the heat of love,
> By fires far fiercer than are blown to prove
> And purge the silver ore adulterate.
> She sat and wept, and with her untressed hair
> Still wiped the feet she was so blest to touch;
> And He wiped off the soiling of despair
> From her sweet soul—because *she loved so much.*"

Amongst the less brilliant names of those who, though not actually members of the Brotherhood, yet imbibed their spirit, is that of Noel Paton.

Born in Dunfermline in 1821, he began by painting works of fantasy, covered large canvases with scenes from fairy land, painting everything with a wonderful minuteness and fidelity. In later life he turned to sacred subjects, and came largely under

the influence of Ary Scheffer. His work is full of reverence and devout feeling, and his paintings have enjoyed a wide reputation, but he has never risen into great heights; his conception of the Face of Christ is serious and noble, but it is not sublime. He was a sincere artist without being a great one, and his works, though pleasing, never profoundly move the beholder. At one time of his career he was intimately associated with Millais, and the influence of the Pre-Raphaelites is seen in his minute and patient handling of detail.

The illustration is taken from his painting entitled "De Profundis," which is based upon the verses in the Psalms: "Out of the depths have I cried unto thee, O Lord! Lead me to the rock that is higher than I"; and the Christ, bending down, stretches forth His arms to lift up a female figure, who, on the wings of faith, is rising out of the depths. His face, which is the conventional likeness, is full of love and kindness. This is one of the most successful of the artist's efforts, and is worthy of a place amongst those sincere efforts of devout artists to express the work of the Redeemer of men in such a way as shall reach and satisfy the heart.

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NOEL PATON. De Profundis.

(*By permission of Messrs Manson, Swan & Morgan.*)

CHAPTER XVI

Modern Types

Sacred Art has had few great exponents in the latter half of the nineteenth century. Painters of scriptural subjects and of the Christ Face there are many, but their conceptions have lacked enthusiasm and conviction. The old ideals and emotions have lost their appeal, and the prophet who heralds the advent of the new has not yet appeared, though men wait anxiously for him, and scan the east for his appearing.

Of that large circle of artists who felt the impulse of the Pre-Raphaelite movement, or the spell of Rossetti, the one who draws most inspiration from the Scriptures, and from Christian legends, is Sir Edward Burne-Jones. Destined for the Church, he went up to Exeter College, Oxford, in 1852, and met there a kindred spirit in William Morris.

Oxford at this time was in the full flood of the Tractarian movement. In 1845 Newman and Faber had seceded to Rome; the year before Burne-Jones went up to Oxford Manning had followed suit, and in the year following 400 clergymen and laity,

"chiefly impressionable undergraduates, young ladies, and young ladies' curates," attached themselves to the Romish Church.

The Tractarian movement was intellectually a protest against the aggressive individualism of the age; politically it was a rebound against the liberalism which had carried the Reform Bill; theologically it was a conservative reaction toward authority, and toward mediæval conceptions of the Church and Sacraments; spiritually it was a sincere protest against the prevailing laxity of morals, and the lack within the Church of spiritual earnestness.

This romance movement—for it was but part of a larger tide which had affected literature before it swept into the sphere of religion—appealed irresistibly to the impressionable minds of the two youths; its asceticism appealed to one side of their natures, its mediævalism to the other. They had young men's dreams of "combining an ascetic life with the organised productions of religious Art."

Art, however, rather than Orders called them, and together looking at a water-colour drawing of Rossetti's—"Dante drawing the Face of Beatrice"—they felt the baptism of fire, "we were both so overcome that we could not speak a word about it." So out from the gates of Exeter passed these two who in their several ways were to become a force in the realms of Art.

In the early efforts of Burne-Jones the ascendency

of Rossetti is clearly marked, an ascendency which remained all through his life; but even more than Rossetti he felt the spell of the ancient myths, the appeal of mediæval and Byzantine Art, the intoxication of the beautiful. His Art is rich and exotic; the atmosphere in which his exquisite creations move seems heavy with too much sweetness, and their faces appear drugged and wan with satiety. The workmanship is not less exquisite; every portion is rendered with scrupulous and loving care, with high reverence for his subject and his Art.

The illustration which we select is from his beautiful rendering of Christ appearing unto Mary Magdalene on the morning of the Resurrection. The subject is one which was naturally congenial to the mystic and poetic temperament of the artist, and for the expression of those remote and subtle emotions with which he was gifted; and into the subject he has entered with great spiritual insight.

In his rendering of the scene it is to be noted that he has not yielded to the modern craze of literalism, and painted an eastern tomb with the circular stone running in a groove. It is not the necessary function of Art to give historical accuracy to a Gospel narrative, or to use its gifts in the interests of the archæological student; its true function is to make the incident live in the imagination, and enrich the heart. Instead of the literal cave, therefore,

the artist has contented himself with a cavity hewn out of the red sandstone, and within this he has placed the tomb.

The moment the artist has seized upon in his rendering of the subject is that intensely dramatic one in which the first throb of recognition agitates the heart of Mary. The following is the beautiful account given by the evangelist John:—

"But Mary stood without at the sepulchre weeping: and as she wept, she stooped down, and looked into the sepulchre,

"And seeth two angels in white sitting, the one at the head, the other at the feet, where the body of Jesus had lain.

"And they say unto her, Woman, why weepest thou? She saith unto them, Because they have taken away my Lord, and I know not where they have laid Him.

"And when she had thus said, she turned herself back, and saw Jesus standing, and knew not that it was Jesus.

"Jesus saith unto her, Woman, why weepest thou? whom seekest thou? She, supposing Him to be the gardener, saith unto Him, Sir, if thou have borne Him hence, tell me where thou hast laid Him, and I will take Him away.

"Jesus saith unto her, Mary!"

"It seems to me," says Chrysostom, "that while she was speaking to the angels, Christ appeared

Page 236. *Hollyer.*

BURNE-JONES. The Easter Morn.

behind her, and that the angels by their posture, look, and motion, showed that they saw the Lord, and that thus it was that she turned back."

Burne-Jones must surely have read these words of Chrysostom, since this is exactly what his picture suggests. Two shining angels sit, one at the head of the tomb, one at the foot, their great luminous eyes aglow with the rapture of discovery. One of them raises her finger as if to hush Mary's questioning lips, and Mary herself, perceiving the awe on their faces, and the solemn hush, has turned round; her hand gropes for support along the roof of the cave; affrighted she stoops and shrinks, her other hand clutching her garments; a strange look, half terror, half rapture, dawns in her eyes; in a moment she will fall at His feet, and all the anguish, and the pent-up agony in her soul will burst out in a river of healing tears, and in a joy which no Art and no language can express.

Meanwhile the dawn of the Easter morn has broken all along the ridges of the east, and floods with its mystic light the scene, and lights up the Figure and the Face of Christ. His form is tall and drooping, His Face is the ascetic Face of the Byzantine period; the impression the picture makes is deeply spiritual, for, notwithstanding all, it is to these early conceptions that one has to turn for the satisfying type of the Saviour's Face. The conventional type of feature is still retained, and

it comes nearer to the Face so lovingly drawn by the early masters than any other modern example. Reverent and devout, the whole composition is full of spiritual awe, and one turns from it conscious that the artist has pierced far into its hidden mysteries.

The wide range of modern representations of Christ may be seen by turning now to our next illustration, "The Good Shepherd," by W. C. T. Dobson. This is a well-known and deservedly popular picture, and it deals with one of the most beautiful of themes. Few passages in Scripture have more deeply impressed Christian thought and sentiment than that in St John's Gospel, where Christ claims to be the "Good Shepherd," and where He founds His claim upon His willingness to give His life for the sheep. Beautiful as this is, and offering as it does a fruitful and worthy theme for sacred Art, it is strange to reflect that through the whole of the Renaissance period it was seldom or never touched. This subject, as we have seen, was dear to the early Church, so dear indeed that it was by far the most common symbol which they used to represent their Lord and Master. "What was the popular religion of the early Christians?" asks Stanley in his "Christian Institutions," and this is his answer: "It was in one word the religion of the Good Shepherd. The kindness, the courage, the grace, the love, the beauty of the Good Shep-

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W. C. T. Dobson. The Good Shepherd.

herd was to them, if we may so say, Prayer-Book and Articles, Creeds and Canons, all in one. They looked upon that figure, and it conveyed to them all they wanted." As time passed, this beautiful symbol was forgotten; in its place there appeared the Pontiff Christ, or the Omnipotent Judge, the Ecce Homo, or the Christ of the crucifix, and only of late is this oldest and most beautiful of symbols of the Christ returning to Art.

In the illustration before us the artist, while retaining much of the conventional type of feature, has succeeded in creating a distinct type of his own, original in its conception, yet benignant and graciously approachable. The mild eyes look pleadingly out from the canvas; the pose of the figure is dignified and gracious; the face is gentle and full of love's appeal; one feels that His voice when He speaks is one which, the sheep hearing, shall know and follow. The Lamb rests in His arms contentedly and secure; for this is no hireling shepherd who fleeth when the wolf is near, leaving his sheep exposed to danger or to death, but the Protector of all weak and lowly things, the Saviour of the sheep, the Shepherd and Bishop of our souls.

On the Continent religious Art, through the last half of the nineteenth century, has passed through a succession of phases without making any lasting contribution to our subject.

The first half, which produced only the Nazarenes,

was a period of decay, when the criticism which Goethe levelled at the efforts of his own day still held good. "All biblical subjects," he said, "have been robbed of their truth and simplicity and spoilt for sympathetic minds by frigid exaltation and starched ecclesiasticism. By stately mantles falling into folds an effort is made to conceal the empty dignity of the supernatural persons."

For a while what has been described as the "Oriental picture" came into vogue, and was preached with all the enthusiasm of a newly discovered gospel. Artists made pilgrimages to the East, and painted scriptural incidents with local scenery and eastern costume. They introduced the real Jerusalem, and the actual Calvary, and faces bearing the unmistakable features of the Jew, but they could not produce great Art; they were true to the letter, and to the actual, but the soul was not in them, and not all the local colour or dressing could give to their pictures more than an ephemeral interest.

When the Oriental picture had run its course, it was succeeded by the spectacular. It was the era of historical painting, when huge canvases were filled with figures, and when the eye was dazzled by scenic effects. Of the spectacular type of religious subject the best known and most popular in this country is Munkacsy's "Christ before Pilate," a huge canvas crowded with figures frantically gesticu-

lating. The picture represents the chaotic elements raging in the Jewish capital at the Passover Feast, and the mob furiously demanding that Christ should be crucified. Pilate sits unmoved and contemptuous on his throne, and before him stands the Christ. The work is dramatic, but ostentatious; the action is too forced, the shouting too strident. The Face of Christ is marked by keenness and force; it is a proud and intellectual face, marked more by penetration than benevolence.

Following the "spectacular," there appeared the "realistic" picture. A few years ago art circles in France were startled by the appearance in the "Salon" of a picture in which the "Magdalene" was represented dressed in the latest Parisian costume; and the Russian artist Gué still further incensed religious prejudices by offering for the Academy of St Petersburg a picture of "Christ before Pilate," in which Christ was represented as a Russian "moujik," standing with unkempt hair and ragged garments before the imperious and disdainful representative of the law. This picture not only shocked religious prejudices too deeply, but it contained too bitter a reflection on national woe, and it was summarily rejected by the authorities.

Of artists of this school who feel the inspiration of the Gospels, and of the Christ life, the most original is Fritz von Uhde.

Born at Wolkenburg, Saxony, in 1848, he at

the age of eighteen went to study in the Academy, Dresden. For ten years he served in the army, becoming a Captain in the Horseguards; afterwards he continued his Art studies in Munich, and subsequently in Paris under Munkacsy. In 1882 he went to Holland, and was greatly influenced by the work of the modern Dutch school. His paintings covered a wide field of study, but it is as a biblical painter that he has won his successes, and that he has aroused the Art critics of his day.

The new feature in Von Uhde's work is his attempt to bring Christ into contact with modern life. To do this he not only introduces modern types into biblical pictures, but he clothes biblical personages in modern dress. In his first picture—"Suffer the Little Children to come unto Me"— he represents Christ sitting in a school-room, with Dutch-tiled floor, floor mats, and wide windows. Some peasant children gather awkwardly around Him as He sits, a thin, pathetic figure, on a chair in the middle of the room. One little child, with charming naïveté, goes up to Him, looks up into His Face with a beautiful confidence, and holds out her hand to touch His. This picture—which was exhibited in the Salon of 1884—became the subject of embittered criticism; it was declared irreverent to introduce into scriptural subjects modern peasants clad in sabots and in blouses, and offensive to the religious sense to lift Christ out of the sphere in

which the Church has enshrined Him, and place Him down in a peasant's hut in modern Saxony.

In his "Lebensansichten des Kater's Murr," T. A. Hofmann offers an interesting explanation as to why that which was permitted to the old masters without profanation should be denied to the new.

The passage is in the form of a dialogue, and runs thus:—

"Tell me yourself, Reverend Sir: Could you imagine a sacred story with modern costume, a St Joseph in a coat of pilot cloth, a Virgin in a dress with a Turkish shawl thrown over her head? Would it not seem to you an undignified, nay, a horrible profanation of the loftiest theme? And yet the old painters, more especially the Germans, represented all biblical and sacred stories with the costume of their own time, and it would be quite false to maintain that those costumes were better adapted to pictorial representation than the present.

"Well," replied the Abbot, "well, my dear Johannes, in a few words I can put before you thoroughly the difference between the old pious age and the more corrupt era of the present. Consider this: In olden times the sacred stories had so entered into human life, I might even say that they were so much a condition of life, that every one believed the miraculous before his very eyes, and that everlasting Omnipotence might allow it to

happen every day. And to the devout painter, sacred history, to which he turned his attention, was identified with the present: amongst men surrounding him in life he saw the grace of God accomplished, and because he perceived it so vividly he represented it in pictures. But, my dear Johannes, just because the present age is too profane not to stand in hideous contrast with those pious legends, just because no one is in a condition to imagine those miracles taking place amongst them, the representation of them with our modern costume must necessarily appear preposterous, absurd, and even irreverent . . . Si duo idem faciunt non est idem, and it is quite possible that what fills me in an old master with a devout and holy thrill, would seem a profanation to me in a new painter."

The good abbot has stated his case very convincingly, but he has only half stated it, missed perhaps the essential in it. Why to the devout painter in olden days should sacred history be identified with the present, and to modern devout painters be solely identified with the past? Why should men to-day not as much as of old have that spiritual gift of seeing the grace of God accomplished in their midst, and because they see it so vividly, and feel it so overpoweringly, represent it in pictures? And, indeed, is this not the very need of the age—that men will have done thinking in terms of the past, and speak and act in terms which their own day and generation

Page 244.

VON UHDE. Christ and the Magdalene.

(*By permission of the Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge.*)

can feel and understand? Has not the Church too long surrounded Christ with the haze of incense, hidden Him in the tomb, or exalted Him into the heavens, captured Him, and used Him in the interests of the priestly class, tricked Him out in conventional dress, and removed Him far from the common lives of men? Have we not now the task before us to discover the Christ, and recover Him, find Him walking along the dusty lanes of our modern England as He walked the lanes of Palestine; find Him in the city streets, in the homes of the poor and the lonely, in the hovels of the stricken and the sad? It is this every-day Christ the world is looking for; men have got tired of the formal One of the Churches and the Schools. We need the Gospel re-interpreted to us in terms of the present, and painted for us with such truth to modern needs, that when we think of Christ we shall not think of Him as One who lived in the long ago, and died on Calvary; nor of One who moved pitifully for three short years in distant Palestine with a halo around His head, and purple-clad disciples following in His train, but as One who to-day is near us in our need, living in our midst as actually as He lived in Palestine twenty centuries ago.

> "Ring out the old, ring in the new,
> Ring in the Christ that is to be!"

This then we take it is what we seek most in modern religious Art—the bringing it into relation

with actual life, and from our artists the power so to see the grace of God accomplished in the life around them, that they will give our modern life its spiritual interpretation, and bring Christ into contact with it. The fact that we cannot imagine Christ sitting down in a modern peasant's hut, and sharing with him his humble fare, only shows how little we think of Christ at all, and how little we know Him.

The only illustration of Uhde's work which we have been able to secure is his "Christ appearing to Mary on the Easter morn." This is not his best picture, nor does it represent in any particular degree the realism which is his chief characteristic. The "Christ Face," however, is full of sympathy, and is tenderly drawn. Like all this artist's work, it is characterised by intensity and sincerity.

Of modern religious paintings, perhaps the best known and the most popular are those of J. M. H. Hofmann. These have obtained a wide celebrity, and are to be found in numberless reproductions scattered over Europe. Hofmann is not a great painter, but he is a pleasing one, and there is that in his religious works—a smoothness, refinement, and sentiment—which makes them widely popular, and which has given them a foremost place in the religious Art of to-day.

Hofmann was born in Darmstadt in 1824. After travelling widely in Holland, France, and Italy, he settled down in Munich, where he became professor.

Page 246. *F. E. Wachsmuth, Leipzig.*

J. M. H. Hofmann. The Saviour.

He has painted several scenes from Shakespeare, but his chief work has been done in the sphere of religious Art. The best known of his pictures in this country are "Christ in Gethsemane," a picture of dramatic intensity, and "Christ and the young Ruler." In this the young Ruler who, to quote Dante, "made through cowardice the great refusal," and whom the stern imagination of the poet sees tossed about on the confines of the outer world, rejected by Heaven, scorned even by Hell, is represented by the artist as an exceedingly attractive youth, with refined and intellectual face, who turns away sad at heart and irresolute. The picture suggests that the artist accepts the kindlier tradition which brings the young ruler back and enrolls him amongst the faithful.

Hofmann's chief fame, however, rests upon his conception of the Christ Face which appears in all his pictures in the same unvarying type, and which is refined and spiritual. The conventional features are retained, but not slavishly followed, and he throws into the face a blended refinement and pathos which lifts his conception out of the commonplace, and gives it distinction. In this illustration we have the artist at his best; the drapery is exceedingly effective, and the pose of the figure is singularly noble and commanding. The attitude closely resembles the famous statue of Thorwaldsen's described in a previous chapter, but there is more animation here and more entreaty. Of the benignant Christs this is

the most acceptable, and no one could look long upon this entreating figure without being drawn nearer to the divine original.

The last illustration is one which hardly needs description, since its appeal is so direct and winning. The "Christ and the Children" by Ottilie Roederstein is the most modern of all conceptions, for the child is a discovery of the most recent years. Literature has found here a new and engrossing subject, and even science has bent its eyes to the little ones of the world, and has begun to be deeply concerned about their well-being and their doings. This interest in the child is part of that awakened humanitarian sentiment which is so deeply influencing our modern life, and which is likely still more deeply to influence it in the days to come. It was not to be expected that Art would remain unmoved by this emotion, and in Zimmermann's well-known picture, "Christ and the Fisherman," where Christ is seen in conversation, no longer with dignified and beautifully clad disciples, but with rough fishermen whose hands and faces are seared with oppressive toil, and in this beautiful picture where children have once more found their Friend, we see this modern sentiment finding expression. And with what true instinct are these little ones drawn! Faith stands with clasped hands, and the Saviour's arm draws her to Him. Love looks up confidingly in His face and smiles, and the hand of Love meets the trustful little fingers, and His eyes

Page 248. *Brann, Clement.*

OTTILIE ROEDERSTEIN. Christ and the Children.

rest upon her, while Hope—pensive and wondering —stands without the circle of actual contact, and yet finds her secret joy in Him who denied it not to the poorest and loneliest of the children of men. This is the Christ of brotherly love, so far removed from the pontiff Christ with which we began, sitting apart on His Throne in the apse of the Basilica, and looking down with distant eye upon the awed and trembling worshippers below! So far have Art and thought travelled in their search for the actual Christ. And yet may it not be that, wide apart as they seem, the Church has need of both? for the Brother as well as for the High Priest, for the human Jesus, bone of our bone, and flesh of our flesh, as well as for the mystical Christ?

Between these two conceptions Theology has swung, now reaching one extreme, now the other; now exalting Christ into Heaven, now making Him the Friend of those on earth; now the mystical Saviour, now the human Friend; now emptying Him of His divinity, now of His humanity, ever seeking, ever finding, yet never finally attaining, never finally satisfied. And as with Theology, so with Art. Through these long centuries in which we have found our way, how many have been the changes! how many schools have risen! how many fallen! Yet all have been seeking to reach the Christ, to satisfy the hearts of those who love and worship Him. Noble and reverent have been the attempts,

yet in this highest test of Art and the spiritual imagination perfect success must ever be denied. "The more I recall the efforts I have made to express the Face of the Christ," says Sir Edward Burne-Jones, "the more discontented I am with them. I do not think there is one which can be looked upon as anything but a failure." To the last day of his life, Titian, the greatest of the Venetians, dreamed of painting a Christ that would satisfy his imagination and his heart, but he died, and his dream was never realised. Beautiful and noble as the conceptions of the Christ Face have been, greatly as they have enriched the spiritual lives of men, Art can never lay aside her brushes and say, "Behold! my task is done." Christ must dominate the Art of the future as He has dominated the Art of the past; must be its Guide and its Inspirer, leading it into ever new and richer realms, opening to it ever enlarging vistas of truth.

"Yea! through life, death, through sorrow and through sinning,
Christ shall suffice me, for He hath sufficed.
Christ is the end, for Christ was the beginning,
Christ the beginning, for the end was Christ."

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